



**DELHI UNIVERSITY**  
**LIBRARY**

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cl. No. X19:595:N5

H5

*Date of release for loan*

Ac. No. 63221

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped  
below. An overdue charge of one anna will be charged for each day  
the book is kept overtime.

---



## The Polish Worker





FELIKS GROSS

*The Polish Worker*

A STUDY OF  
A SOCIAL STRATUM



---

ROY PUBLISHERS · NEW YORK

*Copyright 1915 by*

ROY PUBLISHERS, A.N., NEW YORK

PRINTED AND BOUND IN THE U. S. A BY  
KINGSPORT PRESS, INC., KINGSPORT, TENN.

*To the martyrs of the Polish Labor Movement,  
who died fighting for freedom, democracy and  
human decency.*



---

## Preface

---

The social history of Poland is practically unknown in the United States and England; even less known are the Polish workers and the Polish labor movement. This is not surprising, for there is no book in the English language to fill out this gap. No monograph has been written on the Polish labor movement, despite its many interesting features and the important role it may play in the future.

There is no doubt that the world significance of the labor movements of England, America, Russia and certain other countries, is far greater than that of the Polish movement, yet the Polish movement is important within the framework of Europe, and deserves attention were it only for scientific reasons.

The aim of this book is to contribute at least in part to the filling out of this gap. The first chapter deals with the social history of the Polish proletariat. The subsequent chapters discuss the sociological structure of the Polish proletariat, its economic condition, Polish labor legislation, and the social milieu of Polish workers, as illustrated in excerpts from workers' memoirs. The various forms of the labor movement really merit a special volume; here they are presented only briefly, and a number of important details have had to be omitted. A special chapter is devoted to the situation of the Polish proletariat under Nazi occupation, while the concluding chapter surveys the present-day situation of the Polish working class and contains a few generalizations, deliberately avoided in the preceding chapters.

The reader must excuse the numerous omissions in this study. It was written under difficult circumstances; very often it proved impossible to find the relevant source material which can be had only in Poland.

## *Preface*

The emphasis on documentation in this book is demanded by its subject and the circumstances under which it was written. So little is known about Polish labor in the Anglo-Saxon countries that recently a serious liberal magazine in the United States published a letter to the editor in which it was argued that there is not a labor movement in Poland. It is also unlikely that another book on Polish labor will be written in the near future, and the present study may have to serve for a good many years. Moreover, the Polish problem has become crucial in international politics and will be crucial in the coming peace settlement. We hope that the documentation will contribute to an objective presentation of this problem.

To lessen the strain on the reader I have avoided footnotes whenever possible. The Bibliography appended at the end of the book will, to some extent, serve as a guide. However, I have taken care to indicate dates and sources for all my statistical material. In the chapter on the condition of the workers under German occupation I used as source material the underground press, the secret reports of the Polish underground (mostly unpublished) which I was fortunate enough to secure from Polish official sources and other material. When using underground sources I naturally could not quote the full texts nor indicate their exact origins.

The chapter on Polish workers abroad is intended only to indicate the scope of a problem which has been discussed in greater detail in American literature.

A large part of this book was written in Polish. It was translated by Norbert Guterman whose assistance was invaluable in editing the text and who showed sincere interest and expert understanding of the problems involved. I wish to express my thanks here to him and all my friends, especially those from "Poland Fights," who have encouraged me in my work and whose observations have often been very helpful.

This study was written in the leisure hours I could spare from my everyday work, and every moment was precious. In the Slavonic Department of the New York Public Library I found fraternal understanding of my aims, as well as many sources I needed. Dr. Berlstein did not spare any efforts to supply this material and facilitate my work. I express my thanks to him and to the directors of the Slavonic Department for their help.

New York, December 1, 1944.

Feliks Gross

---

# Contents

---

Preface . . . . .	7
-------------------	---

## PART ONE

### SOCIAL ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF THE POLISH WORKERS

1. The Social Origin of the Polish Workers . . . . .	11
BACKGROUND; THE OLD STOCK: MINERS, FOUNDERS, MASON- SONS; INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND CAPITALISM; BIG IN- DUSTRY: THE POSITIVISTS; THE NEW STOCK: INDUSTRIAL WORKERS; SAILORS; PARTITIONS AND SOCIAL HISTORY.	
2. The Social Structure of the Polish Urban Proletariat . . . . .	25
WORKERS ON STATE MONOPOLIES; SO-CALLED GOVERN- MENT WORKERS; THE BEST ORGANIZED AND MOST HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS; SKILLED SEASONAL WORKERS AND MEDIUM-SKILLED WORKERS; SMALL HANDICRAFTS—THE "CHALUPNIKS"; THE UNSKILLED WORKERS; THE AGRI- CULTURAL WORKER—THE "FORNAL"; THE UNEM- PLOYED; THE LUMPENPROLETARIAT; SUMMARY.	

## PART TWO

### STANDARD OF LIVING

3. The Structure of Polish Wages . . . . .	45
THE BASIC WAGES; THE ADDITIONAL INCOME OF THE WORKERS' FAMILIES; THE BUDGET OF THE POLISH WORKER; THE BUDGET AND WAGES OF THE POLISH WORKER AS COMPARED WITH THE WORKERS OF OTHER COUNTRIES; GENERAL REMARKS.	
4. Labor Legislation in Poland . . . . .	55
TRADE UNIONS; LABOR CONTRACTS AND COLLECTIVE BAR- GAINING; EIGHT-HOUR WORK-DAY AND HOLIDAYS; EM- PLOYMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS, AND WOMEN; INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE AND SAFETY; LABOR INSPECTORS, LABOR COURTS, ARBITRATION; SOCIAL SECURITY IN PO- LAND.	



## *Contents*

### PART THREE

#### THE POLISH WORKER WRITES ABOUT HIMSELF

5. Social Memoirs in Poland . . . . . 71
6. Texts . . . . . 78
- THE INTERPRETATION OF WORKERS' MEMOIRS; CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH; MEMOIRS OF PEASANTS; HUNGER AND UNEMPLOYMENT; WORK; BOOKS.

### PART FOUR

#### THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN POLAND

7. Polish Socialism . . . . . 107
- "THE SPRING OF NATIONS"; THE INSURRECTION OF 1863, THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871; BEGINNINGS OF THE POLISH SOCIALIST UNDERGROUND; BIRTH OF THE PPS (POLISH SOCIALIST PARTY); OTHER SOCIALIST PARTIES; THE POLISH SOCIALIST-DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPSD) IN THE AUSTRIAN-OCCUPIED PART OF POLAND; POLISH SOCIALISM UNDER GERMAN RULE; THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE AGAINST TSARISM: 1905; THE EVE OF THE WAR: CRACOW AS A REVOLUTIONARY CENTER; 1914-1918; THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT IN LUBLIN; THE FIRST YEARS OF POLISH INDEPENDENCE; OTHER POLITICAL GROUPINGS OF POLISH LABOR IN INDEPENDENT POLAND; POLISH DEMOCRACY BETWEEN 1918 AND 1926; THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1926 AND 1930; LABOR STRUGGLES FOR DEMOCRACY: THE CONGRESS OF 1930; THE WAVE OF RESISTANCE BETWEEN 1930 AND 1939.
8. Trade Unions and Co-operatives . . . . . 145
- TRADE UNION MOVEMENT; THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT; EDUCATION, SPORTS.
9. Polish Workers Abroad . . . . . 156

### PART FIVE

#### POLISH LABOR UNDER THE NAZIS

10. The Underground Struggle . . . . . 163
- RESISTANCE GROUPS; THE BATTLE OF THE GHETTO: 1943; THE BATTLE OF WARSAW: 1944; THE IDEOLOGY OF THE UNDERGROUND LABOR MOVEMENT IN POLAND.
11. German Labor Policy in Poland . . . . . 200
- THE RACIAL ISSUE; SOURCES.
12. Wages and Cost of Living . . . . . 208
- THE LEGAL STATUS; THE WAGES AND FOOD SITUATION.

## *Contents*

13. The End of Polish Labor Legislation . . . . .	220
THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY AND WORKERS' HOLIDAYS; CHILD LABOR; ARBITRATION COMMISSIONS, LABOR COURTS, AND LABOR INSPECTIONS; SOCIAL INSURANCES.	
14. Forced Labor . . . . .	225
LEGAL STATUS; LABOR RECRUITING—MAN HUNTS AND KIDNAPPING; THE NUMBER OF POLISH WORKERS IN THE REICH; THE FATE OF THE POLISH WORKER IN THE REICH.	
15. Jewish Labor in Occupied Poland . . . . .	235
LEGAL STATUS; TYPES OF JEWISH LABOR IN POLAND; JEWISH COMPULSORY LABOR CAMPS IN OCCUPIED PO- LAND; JEWISH "FREE LABOR" IN POLAND.	
16. Some Consequences of Nazi Domination Over Polish Labor . . . . .	240

## PART SIX

## EPILOGUE

17. The Polish Proletariat in Its European Framework . . . . .	245
KARL MARX AND THE POLISH WORKERS; SOCIAL STRATA OF POLAND; THE INTELLIGENTSIA; THE POLISH INTEL- LIGENTSIA: A RULING GROUP; SOCIAL FORCES; SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AND POLISH REALITY; INSURRECTIONISM IN POLISH SOCIALISM; INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON; CON- CLUSION.	
Selected Bibliography . . . . .	269



*Part One*

SOCIAL ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE  
OF THE POLISH WORKERS



---

## The Social Origin of the Polish Workers

---

### BACKGROUND

Francis Delaisi once drew a line dividing Europe into two worlds, the Europe of the steam-horse and the Europe of the draught-horse. This line runs through the heart of Poland from Danzig to Cracow, and in tracing it Delaisi took into account not only statistics, but also social and economic realities. Naturally the division is not as clear-cut in actual fact as it is in theory. Besides this, the frontier area between the two parts is one where the two systems interpenetrate; it extends for some distance and cannot be fixed by a line. Yet in its general implications Delaisi's idea is valid. Both sociologically and economically Poland is a land of transitions.

Poland has always been the tragic crossroads of Europe. Not the will of her people but history has imposed upon the Poles a destiny full of suffering and heroic struggles. Because Poland is on the road to the East—to Russia, the Balkans, Turkey—she has been swept by great wars and conflagrations more frequently than other European countries. The Swedes, the French and the Germans have passed over her territory and Tartars, Turks, and Russians have invaded her. The dogs of war have always trampled the great crossroads of civilization.

The country had no sooner recovered from one war and laid the foundations for a new life than another invasion turned villages and cities into shambles. This is one of the main historical reasons for the poverty of Poland, despite her natural riches. It has also had an important influence on the psychology and customs of the people, who from generation to generation have lived with the memory and under the threat of tragic conflagrations, forever engaged in the effort to reconstruct their country.

Another important factor in shaping Poland's destiny was her century and a half of captivity. From 1772 to 1918, Poland was

partitioned among Russia, Austria and Germany, all of whom subordinated the economic and industrial development of their Polish possessions to their own economic interests. The Polish state that arose after 150 years of captivity was thus composed of three heterogeneous parts, and the economic life of each of these parts had been integrated into that of a different usurping power. In addition, the population had developed differently as a result of various political and cultural factors. The integration of the new Poland was therefore a difficult task. Although between 1918 and 1939 this integration proceeded vigorously and the differences caused by the partition rapidly diminished, they left their mark on the economic structure of Poland.

Finally, geographical causes, particularly the distribution of Poland's natural wealth, lay at the root of her division. The main coal and iron deposits are in the southwest, the Cracow region, the Zaglembe Basin and Silesia. In the southeast there is oil. Poland's heavy industry, her mines and foundries, were situated also in the southwest, near her coal deposits. These regions are so industrialized that the landscape sometimes gives the impression of an uninterrupted manufacturing and urban terrain. In Silesia, the train moves through an endless chain of towns, factories and mines, as typical of this country as the many-colored cultivated fields are typical of the eastern regions. Western Poland, the Poznan region, is dominated by industries connected with agriculture. The textile industry is concentrated in the northwest, around Lodz; there are also two big textile centers in Bielsko (southern Silesia) and Bialystok, east of the Vistula. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Warsaw became an important center (food, chemical and dry-goods industries). But the densest concentration of industry follows the line of the Vistula. During the last years preceding the present war, a great industrial center, the so-called COP (Central Industrial Region) was created for strategic reasons in the triangle formed by the San and Vistula Rivers, and as a result the industrial population moved eastward.

The structure of Poland's population must be therefore considered in the light of her regional differences. The industrial workers are concentrated in the west. As we move eastward, the percentage of agricultural population becomes higher, and in the eastern provinces agriculture is prevalent.

THE OLD STOCK: MINERS, FOUNDERS, MASONS

It is generally believed that the Polish working class has only recently appeared on the scene, and that it is still bound to the village by tradition and family ties, rather than to the factory. This opinion is in part correct. To a considerable extent the Polish working class is still a young class; its members come from the country and are often still connected with it. Yet there are trades, types of production and regions in which the Polish working class is a socially old element, that is to say, has been for many generations associated with a given industry or mine.

The invention of the steam engine and the industrial revolution that followed it compelled many artisans to abandon their workshops and to earn a living in the factories; many handicrafts ceased to exist altogether, as for instance the craft of the armorer when the technique of warfare changed, and mail-coats and shields became useless. Similarly, the needlers disappeared when the manufacture of needles was taken over by the capitalist machine producers. As the crafts disappeared, the traditions and customs of the artisans also disappeared; only remnants of them survived in the factories, which constituted an entirely new environment.

It was, however, different in the mines, for example, the salt mines. Here the industrial revolution took place in the same locality, in the same workshop. The miner continued to do the same work in the same shaft, nor was the technique of mining fundamentally altered, as it was in the production of manufactured goods. In the mines, the industrial revolution merely brought about the replacement of the hand elevator by the mechanical elevator and the hand pump by the steam pump. Horses and wagons were used in the mines until very recently; the automatic drill is a comparatively modern invention (second half of the nineteenth century), and the technique of using it was learned by the same miners who had used the more old-fashioned tools. Thus, in certain districts, the miner continued his connection with his old workshop not only functionally, but also organically.

Polish mining began long ago: the first salt mines of Wieliczka and Bochnia near Cracow can be traced back a thousand years. In the Middle Ages and afterwards the Polish salt miners were organized in so-called "*gwarectwa*," which had a certain legal resemblance to the corporative crafts. The miners were



thus freemen, and their social and cultural status was high. The founders were also free. A poem by Walenty Rozdziński, a Polish founder from Upper Silesia, entitled "*Officina Ferraria*," or "The Foundry and Workshop with Smithies of the Noble Iron Craft," written in Polish and published in Cracow in 1612, gives us a striking picture of the conditions prevailing in the foundries at that time:

We live in shabby houses, and little  
Do we care for splendid buildings and  
Luxurious beds. The walls are made of  
Peat thatch; we sleep on dry leaves,  
The prey of fleas and flies.  
So do not ask in this foundry  
For the comforts people covet in the  
World outside . . .  
We enjoy the freedom we inherited  
From our ancestors, and though poor,  
We love one another.  
Freedom is our sole delight, the sole reward  
Of our misery, not treasures, not money!  
Since the Cyclops' time we have never been  
Slaves to any tyrant. Free to come  
And go as we please, after one year  
In one place we can move to another. . . .

This is only a short excerpt from this poem which is an interesting historical document. Freedom was the fundamental privilege of the miners' and founders' crafts. In seventeenth-century Poland, Rozdziński emphasizes its value when the peasants were serfs, bound to the soil. This freedom, like the trades themselves, was hereditary, handed down from father to son.

The same poem contains other interesting details. Its author depicts the Silesian mines, where people like himself, Polish miners and also foreigners worked, and relates the legends which Rozdziński himself accepted at their face value. Similar survivals of the founders' and miners' culture and folklore are to be found in the old Wieliczka mines, where, in addition to legends, we find plastic art—carvings in blocks of salt. This branch of popular sculpture developed in the Wieliczka mines in the course of long centuries.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when Polish mining as an industry began to develop particularly in that part

of Poland occupied by Austria, that is, the Cracow Basin, Polish miners were often brought from Wieliczka or Silesia to the coal mines. These miners trained the local unskilled laborers in their trade, and acted as foremen or guides, who brought to this region not only their professional skill, but also their traditions, customs, organizing abilities and legends. Thus the legends about kindly spirits and treasure-keepers who haunt the mines of Upper Silesia—legends which Rozdziński quotes as current in the seventeenth century—were retold to the author by aged miners in the relatively modern coal shafts of the Cracow Basin. Ethnographers of the diffusionist school may object that these legends are foreign elements, that, like many others, they have traveled far from their place of origin. This, however, is beside the point; what is important is that they have become an integral part of the Polish miners' culture.

The mines and foundries were, then, the earliest breeding ground of a working group conscious of its own interest, which succeeded in bringing certain elements of its old handicraft into modern industry. Despite the industrial revolution, these groups passed with all their cultural capital into the new productive system and were integrated into the new social order. This process is also characteristic of Poland, where it left indelible marks.

We find examples of similar cultural inheritance and links between the old artisan elements and the modern workers wherever the technical transformation that took place during the industrial revolution left undisturbed the continuity of the trade. This was not true of the production of manufactured goods, in which the technical changes were so considerable that the handicraft organizations and the handicrafts themselves disintegrated as a result.

Continuity was preserved in the carpenter's and even more in the mason's trades. Bricklaying came to Poland with Gothic architecture in the thirteenth century and became widespread in the fourteenth, and from that time until the introduction of concrete the technique of building did not change. As a result, the masons have retained much of their traditional culture, and to this very day Polish masons mark the completion of the rough construction up to the roof by an age-old celebration, the so-called *wiecha* (bush). The mason's trade, too, has often been hereditary for many centuries.

Another survival of the past are the *Flisaks*. These are boatmen on the Vistula, who for centuries have transported various

goods, lumber and later, chiefly coal, in their barges called *galars*. The *galar* is a wide flat-bottomed boat, a kind of large raft with a railing, in the center of which there is a tiny house with just room for two persons to sleep. There the *Flisaks* rest at night. The *galars* float down the river with the current; they are tugged up again by steamers—in olden times they were pulled by horses or were sold at the river's mouth. Until this day the *galars* sail along the Vistula just as they did a hundred or five hundred years ago, and with them some of the traditions, customs and organization of the *Flisaks* have remained. Just as they have done for centuries, they still stop today at the inn in Niepolomice near Cracow or land at the bottom of the steps of the splendid castle of Wawel.

Another calling which has not changed in the course of centuries is that of the sand-digger, who today pulls sand from the bottom of the Vistula with the help of a bucket attached to a pole, just as his ancestors did centuries ago. All these crafts are old; they have been practiced for hundreds of years in the same districts of the cities, in the same villages and the same families. Here, the workers' social origin is as ancient as his tradition.

I hope my readers will forgive me if I briefly interrupt this investigation of the facts and laws of social development to evoke the sunny days I spent on the Vistula with the modern heirs of these archaic trades. I recall the Polish *Flisaks*, masons and miners with the greatest pleasure and their memory moves me as does the sound of the *Marseillaise* since the fall of Paris. They are open-hearted, gay, witty and original, with a peculiar sense of their professional dignity, inherited from their fathers. This originality manifests itself especially in their speech, that characteristic speech of the suburbs and the old trades which has borrowed many terms from foreign languages but has also preserved numberless old Polish expressions elsewhere forgotten. They have also preserved the old customs of the towns and in Cracow it was chiefly the masons who represented the popular tradition cultivated in that city for centuries. Yet these same masons were also the radical, progressive element in the trade unions and supplied the Polish Socialist Party with many recruits from the suburbs. They knew how to combine tradition with progress, and the same can be said of the other crafts. At the inns situated near the banks of the Vistula in the old quarter of Cracow one used to hear dialogues which made one think that Lucian was talking with these men over a glass of beer.

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND CAPITALISM

These traditional and hereditary crafts, however, constitute only a small fraction of the Polish working class as a whole; we have devoted so much space to them because their social background is as typical as it is little known. In general, when we speak of the workers we mean first of all the industrial workers, the factory workers, the children of the industrial revolution. As a great social class, dynamic and conscious of its unity, they did not appear in the Congress Kingdom until the 1870's when modern industry became widespread.

The industrial revolution in Poland took place later than in Western Europe. Its first harbingers appeared only after 1815, that is, after the Congress of Vienna, which definitely partitioned Poland among Austria, Prussia and Russia; out of Cracow and its surroundings the Free City of Cracow was created. The territory under Russian occupation, the so-called Congress Kingdom, was granted a certain measure of independence, and had its own army, treasury, and administration under the crown of the Tsar, who also held the title of King of Poland.

Many Poles then determined that their country must be saved from abject misery, and realized that the Polish kingdom must be developed economically in order to better resist Russian influence. The leader of this trend was Ksawery Lubecki, a highly talented statesman who held the post of Minister in the government of the kingdom. He was the real creator of Polish industry and trade.

Lubecki formulated the principles of his economic policy in this way: "Poland must have everything that is needed to secure her independence, otherwise she will lose everything. She needs three things: (1) schools, that is, enlightenment and education; (2) industry and trade, that is, prosperity and wealth, and (3) armament works." He gathered around him talented and energetic assistants who shared his ideas. The Minister's gaze was fixed on distant lands—on the vast expanses of Russia and far-away fabulous China, and in this boundless and completely unknown market he saw an immense opportunity for Polish industry.

Polish textile centers were created. Villages were transformed into small towns within a few years, and after several decades these towns were pulsating industrial centers. In 1824, nine years after the creation of the Congress Kingdom, the exports

of Polish cloth to China amounted to 2,207,000 Polish *zlotys*.<sup>1</sup> This was the work of Lubecki.

In 1820, Lodz, now the Polish Manchester and one of the biggest textile centers on the European continent, had 767 inhabitants, and when questioned as to the occupation of his townsmen, the burgomaster of Lodz replied with one word: agriculture. In 1821, this town was granted the rights of a manufacturing city. In an official record dated 1825 we read the following: "This is a small town with wooden houses. Two years ago it was designated as suitable for various factories. Its location is very favorable for this purpose. At present there are 31 drapers with 59 workshops, 27 master-weavers of cotton with 46 workshops, and 5 linen manufacturing masters. Many buildings are under construction for manufacturing enterprises." Fifteen years later, in 1840, the population of Lodz had risen to 15,000, and it was more than 600,000 before the Second World War.

New cities sprang up and grew like mushrooms after rain—not only textile centers, but also mining towns. After 1815 workshops and manufacturers developed. The first steam-engines reached the Congress Kingdom between 1820 and 1830; they continued arriving in the 1830's, but it was not until 1850 that industry based on steam-engines began to develop rapidly. In 1848 the important Warsaw-Vienna railroad was built, connecting the Congress Kingdom with the West and facilitating the importation of machines and equipment.

Industry developed in spite of various obstacles and changing political conditions. In 1830, the Polish nation took up arms for its freedom and independence. The insurrection was crushed, and the few freedoms guaranteed by the Congress of Vienna were largely wiped out. The creation of the conditions necessary for industrial development grew more difficult; but the pioneering efforts of a handful of talented men had not been in vain, and industry continued to grow at an accelerated rate.

All over Europe labor conditions were bad. They were also bad in Poland which was moreover impoverished by the constant invasions it had suffered. The rate of exploitation during the industrial revolution in England was tremendous—for on it was based the primitive accumulation of capital. This was true also of Poland. The working day was not established by law, and lasted for at least twelve hours, usually more than that.

<sup>1</sup> The Polish *zloty* (in 1824) was equivalent to 15 *kopeks* (20 *zlotys* = 3 *rubles*).

On Saturdays and the days before holidays and market days, work in most crafts lasted until late at night and even until the following morning in order to complete orders or get merchandise ready for sale at the fairs. Printing shops and sugar factories as a rule did not observe Sundays and holidays. Elements of the old noblemen-peasants' relationship which originated in serfdom were often carried over into industry, and influenced the employer-employee relationship.

In Upper Silesia, the territory under German occupation, industry also grew rapidly: the management was German and the labor Polish. Conditions of work were very hard, sometimes monstrously so. Rudolf Virchow, the great German naturalist who visited Silesia in 1848, has left a striking description of the misery and starvation prevailing in that province, and Hugo Solger, author of a monograph on Upper Silesia published in 1860, mentions the general use of the whip in the mines belonging to the Prussian coal barons. According to him, the working day in the pits was twelve hours long. Industry also developed in Galicia, which was under Austrian occupation.

#### BIG INDUSTRY: THE POSITIVISTS

After crushing the insurrection of 1830, the Tsarist government oppressed the Poles more than ever. Polish universities were closed, the prisons were overcrowded. The Russian authorities attempted to pacify the country by imposing such penalties as confiscation of property, deportation to Siberia and the gallows. In 1863 a new insurrection broke out, in which many workers took part. The oppression after this insurrection was ruthlessly carried out: young people were forcibly drafted into the army and sent to distant countries; there were mass executions and deportations to Siberia. After going through the Napoleonic wars and suffering defeats in two great popular insurrections, the most vital forces of the country were exhausted. But out of this political situation new political and economic currents were born: "organic work" and positivism. "Building from the foundations," the development of economic life, the enrichment of the country and the raising of its cultural level were the basic principles of this new trend. The elimination of the customs border between the Congress Kingdom and Russia opened up the possibility of a large new market, and the positivists wanted to make use of it for the economic development of the country. Poland had lost much blood—now, the positiv-

ists declared, she must gather new strength and equal the great economic and cultural progress of the other nations.

In the development of Polish capitalism 1870 marked a turning point. Before 1850, weaving mills had been the dominant element in the new industrial economy; after 1850, machines became increasingly frequent and from 1870 heavy industry began to develop on a really big scale. The positivist movement won public opinion for the cause of industrial development. The emancipation of the peasants in 1864 had enlarged the domestic market and created new reserves of labor power. Big banks and corporations such as the Warsaw Coal Mining Society came into being. Prior to 1870 Polish industry was in a transitional stage; after that date, big enterprises were created and large-scale capitalist industry financed by foreign capital began to develop. One of the economic historians of that period correctly states that the industry of the kingdom of Poland was created by Western-European capital and native labor to serve eastern markets. Now once more, just as after 1815, new cities and new factories sprang up and thousands of new workers appeared on the scene. During the second half of the 1870's a small village became transformed into the big industrial town of Sosnowiec, which by 1939 had a population of 130,000 and was an important machine-building, chemical, textile and especially mining center. Other small villages underwent a similar transformation.

#### THE NEW STOCK: INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Simultaneously with the growth of industry there grew up a new social group—the class of industrial workers. This was no longer a submissive and passive class like the fresh unenlightened peasant element of the 1830's: it was a young, politically active class, which grew rapidly. Thus, in Russian Poland, in 1870, 1 out of every 95 inhabitants was a worker; in 1882, 1 out of every 62; in 1897, 1 out of every 38; in 1910, 1 out of every 30.<sup>1</sup> From that time on, Polish history was not only the history of the people's struggle for liberation and national independence, but also the history of their struggle for social justice.

Whence came the Polish industrial workers? I have already shown that in certain crafts and mines, the continuity with the

<sup>1</sup> Stanislaw Koszutski: "The Economic Development of the Kingdom of Poland," Warsaw, 1905; and Alexander Woycicki: "History of the Industrial Workers in Poland," Warsaw, 1929 (in Polish).

preceding historical period was unbroken. But this was not true of the new industries; in these the workers were recruited from three social groups.

First of all, there were the landless peasants. The Polish peasants were given land in 1864 only in that part of Poland which was under Russian occupation. In theory, although not in practice, serfdom had been abolished much earlier—in 1807 in the Duchy of Warsaw,<sup>1</sup> when the Napoleonic eagles brought to the peasants seeming freedom. In accordance with the old laws, they had been attached to the soil which they were forbidden to leave without their lord's permission; they were forced to perform labor service, in return for the right to the land. The edict of 1807 issued after the occupation of Warsaw by French and Polish troops proclaimed "equality before the law." Legally this meant the abolition of serfdom; but in fact the peasants who remained on the land had to perform labor service as before. Moreover, the new laws gave the landlord the right of "notification," that is to say, the right to remove the peasant from the land he had always tilled. No land was then actually given the peasants. But this legal emancipation made possible the movement of the peasants into industry after 1815 when it began to develop in the Congress Kingdom, for they could legally leave their landlords. In 1864 peasants in the Kingdom were granted land, but even then there remained a mass of peasants who were landless or had only very little land, and from these peasants most of the workers were recruited. After 1864 there began a mass migration to the cities. The new soldiers of industry moved from place to place and the natural population increase, one of the highest in Europe, further multiplied the industrial reserve army. There were enough hands for industry both at home and abroad, for at that time began the great emigration overseas. Only the big landlords complained of a shortage of labor.

The second source of labor power was the disintegrating

---

<sup>1</sup> The revolution of 1848 was a decisive moment in the history of the emancipation of the Polish peasants under Prussian and Austrian rule. In Prussia emancipation began in 1807; the laws of 1850 completed the long process of abolition of serfdom. But while the legal process was completed in 1850, in reality the change was much more gradual, and reached an end only by 1875.

The revolution of 1848 in Vienna marked the abolition of serfdom in the Austrian-occupied part of Poland. The law for emancipation was enacted in 1849.

In the Russian-occupied part of Poland this historical step was taken in 1864. This was an act of political strategy in order to steal the thunder from certain groups that advanced the slogan of emancipation during the insurrection of 1863.



handicrafts, which, as everywhere else in Europe, could not compete with the factories. Thus hand weaving had to give way to machine weaving. Between 1870 and 1880, the period of the growth of capitalism in the Congress Kingdom, several thousand small handicraft textile enterprises closed down and the impoverished artisans increased the ranks of the workers. The Jewish workers especially were recruited from the impoverished artisans.

The third source of the new industrial proletariat was immigration. In 1816 privileges that had been granted to foreign workers at an earlier date were confirmed, and several new rights were given to industrial immigrants. After 1820 thousands of Germans, Czechs, and other foreign nationals streamed into the Congress Kingdom, and rapidly became assimilated into the Polish environment and merged with the native population.

Industrial labor was increased by other elements also but because these had no mass character, they were of no fundamental importance. Thus, after 1831 and 1864 many small noblemen's estates were confiscated in reprisal for their owners' participation in the insurrections; their families were left without any means of subsistence, and some of the rebels went to work in the factories. I myself knew labor leaders of whose noble origin I learned only because they came to me for legal consultations in connection with some real estate holding or workers' house in the suburbs. They were people of simple habits who did not use their titles or attach any importance to their pedigrees, and who were completely devoted to the workers' cause. They were in no way different from their comrades. Of course, they were not numerous.

#### SAILORS

Certain industrial groups, which in other countries are very old socially and have a long tradition, were formed in Poland almost before our eyes: the sailors and longshoremen.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Poland had no sea tradition. In the 17th century this tradition had existed although then it was not an important one. Thus the Polish marine was born in 1923 without traditions, and, like industry in Lodz or Zyrardow, developed rapidly. In 1923 the decision was taken to build a port in Gdynia, at that time a village of about 1,000 inhabitants. I myself once saw its miserable fishermen's huts. Eight years later, at the time of the 1931 census, the population

of Gdynia was above 38,000, and shortly before the war this town had a population of about 120,000, and was one of the most important seaports on the Baltic, with a net registered tonnage of entrances higher than that of Danzig, Stockholm, Leningrad, Helsinki or Koenigsberg; it was the home port for more than seventy Polish ships. Before our eyes a new mass of workers was formed—dockers, transport workers, sailors. Today the crews of the Polish ships which sail the seven seas consist of men born far from any seacoast. When the news of the establishment of a Polish port spread through Poland, young workers from all over the country began to stream to Gdynia; miners' sons from Sosnowiec and Dabrowa, mountaineers from Podhale, natives of Warsaw and Cracow. They brought their own organizational traditions with them which they at once introduced into the new Polish port. A strong trade union of transport workers was formed in Gdynia, embracing sailors and port workers. In this province of Pomorze the workers' organizations had formerly been particularly weak, but Gdynia was absolutely different from the old petty bourgeois Pomorze towns; here, the workers' unions and the Polish Socialist Party had a predominant influence. The procedures followed at the meetings and the manner in which these were conducted were reminiscent of the industrial and mining centers of southwestern Poland, the Zagłębie Basin or the Cracow industrial region. Within fifteen years, a varied crowd of newcomers had been transformed into a compact, unified professional group of Polish transport workers, sailors, and longshoremen, a new and dynamic group. The Polish sailors, although they had no tradition, learned their trade and created their organizations in a short time.

#### PARTITIONS AND SOCIAL HISTORY

We have analyzed the origin of the Polish working class on the basis of one region; the Congress Kingdom, that is, the part of Poland that was under Russian occupation. The social origin of the workers in the other occupied parts of Poland is a subject we shall not discuss here at length for reasons of space.

What must be borne in mind is that the liberation of the peasants was accomplished by different methods and at different times in each of the three occupied parts of Poland;<sup>1</sup> there was not one social reform of the Polish peasantry, but three different

<sup>1</sup> See footnote, page 21.

reforms, and as a result, three different developments. Furthermore, Poland did not go through one homogeneous industrial revolution and an identical process of the rise of capitalism. The Prussian part shared the history of German industrialization (especially Silesia). The Austrian part was influenced—and handicapped—by the Austrian developments; moreover in some fields, like coal and oil mining, it has an industrial history of its own.

Thus the Poles failed to go through an identical economic and social process in the most crucial period of modern history, the period of national development, the emancipation of the peasantry, the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism. This fact had serious social and economic repercussions. After the young Polish state had been organized in 1818, it was a hard task to combine three different territories and form a new pattern, a united social and economic system. Despite the difficulties, however, much was accomplished. The united labor movement (particularly in the former Austrian and Russian parts of Poland), the trade unions, the Socialist movement, the educational organizations for workers and adults have contributed a great deal to this process of unification.

## The Social Structure of the Polish Urban Proletariat

The proletariat is not, of course, a separate stratum entirely distinct from the rest of society. It merges with other strata, and certainly does not have the same sharply differentiated social and economic character as the Polish peasants. In everyday political parlance the term urban proletariat designates a social stratum that the average person considers to be homogeneous, because often acting together, and distinct from the rest of society. Actually the proletariat is a complex amalgamation of various groups, and natural and social environment leaves a clear imprint on each of these specific groups.

The social categories which constituted the proletariat were characterized by different economic conditions and different degrees of dependence on the employers; for instance, the difference between a state railroad employee and a seasonal ceramic worker in Poland was equivalent to that between a highly qualified mechanic earning 100 dollars a week and a Negro sharecropper in America. Let us briefly examine several categories of Polish workers.

### WORKERS ON STATE MONOPOLIES: SO-CALLED GOVERNMENT WORKERS

This category comprises workers employed by the state and the municipalities. The Polish government held a number of monopolies (postal services, railroads, matches, tobacco, salt, alcohol) and several industrial enterprises (armaments and munitions plants, chemical works, etc.). Workers employed by the government as a rule enjoyed better conditions and special rights, and, in contrast to those working for private employers, their earnings were stable. They received monthly, not weekly wages, and this made it easier for them to plan their family budget. Moreover, the government workers enjoyed other sub-

stantial advantages such as cheaper lodgings, reduced fares, free working clothes or uniforms, an allowance of coal, etc.

But their most important and basic privilege was job security and pensions. After a certain period every worker in a government enterprise was granted a special so-called "civil status," which guaranteed him steady employment, fixed wages and opportunities for advancement. His employment was steady because he could not be dismissed with the usual two-weeks' notice; in principle he could lose his job only as the result of a real misdemeanor, and only after special legal proceedings. If incapacitated, government workers received an invalid's pension, while upon reaching a certain age, they were pensioned and although they received less than their wages, the sum was sufficient for modest living. Thus the government worker was free from the terrible fear of unemployment and want. He was sure of continuous employment, and of wages that would not fluctuate in economic crises. The wage scales were official, they were published in the government newspaper, and could not be changed during the fiscal year. Besides this, there was steady advancement. A railroad employee knew that if he served for a certain number of years and did his work efficiently he would be promoted to a better job. He could get higher wages without striking, and was not refused a raise just because his hair was graying.

The employee of the government monopolies and of the railroad undoubtedly constituted a distinct professional type and to a certain extent also a distinct social type. His relatively greater social security, especially during the terrible misery and unemployment of the 1930's, determined his way of life, influenced his plans, his social attitudes and the education he gave his children. Many such workers saved their money and tried to build their own little homes, and the suburbs of important railroad junctions became full of such small houses, the possession of which was the dream of many railroad workers. The peasant tradition played a considerable part in this ambition, for to own one's own home is an elementary aspiration of the peasant. A "home of one's own" was regarded as a kind of insurance against misery and homelessness.

The government workers enjoying a "civil status" constituted a numerous group within the organized working class, and the railroad workers succeeded in creating one of the strongest of all the unions, although in government enterprises workers

were under stronger government pressure than in private factories. However, not all government workers were equally well off. The best conditions were enjoyed by the railroad workers, and the workers in the tobacco and salt monopolies. The situation of those employed on public works was entirely different, for here, except for the foremen, the employees had only the usual labor contract. A considerable number of them worked only on the basis of government relief for the unemployed, paid for out of the so-called "Labor Fund," equivalent to the American WPA. Their wage scale was published in the official *Journal of Regulations*, and later was generally accepted as the Polish minimum wage.

The government workers were not the only privileged group, for municipal employees in many cities succeeded in winning similar rights. Several Polish municipalities had considerable funds and employed hundreds of workers. Cracow, for instance, owned an electrical plant, a gas plant, the street cars, the bus lines, the water system, theaters, museums, and slaughterhouses, and, jointly with other Galician cities, coal mines in the Cracow Basin (The Jaworznickie Mines), not to mention several smaller enterprises.

#### THE BEST ORGANIZED AND MOST HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS

Together with the government and municipal workers, the groups of the most highly skilled and best organized workers constituted a kind of labor aristocracy—a term often used on the European continent. However, it must be borne in mind that good organization does not always go hand in hand with skill; highly qualified groups are often badly organized and vice versa.

Highly skilled workers, especially in a country like Poland, enjoyed a far more favorable position than the others. In Poland skilled workers were at a premium, and specialization often gave the worker a monopolistic position, for industry in some branches was just beginning and developing and able hands were needed for the creation of new industries. In big and even medium factories the fluctuations of the economic cycle affected the highly skilled workers least of all. The management hesitated to dismiss them because they determined the value of the product and often were familiar with the secrets of

its manufacture. Their wages were relatively high, their position more independent than those of the other workers. Within the same plant there was quite a difference between the status of the highly qualified and the non-qualified workers; the former often, sometimes all too often, emphasized this difference.

A position of superiority was also enjoyed by workers who were well organized in unions. One of the most powerful of these was the printers' union, perhaps the oldest in Poland, with ancient guild traditions, and, thanks to their organization, the Polish printers succeeded in achieving a relatively high standard of living. The members had to pay heavy dues, but the bureaucratic apparatus, as compared with unions in Western Europe, was not very elaborate. The dues of the members were the basis for substantial health and unemployment insurance funds, and an unemployed printer received five times as much from his union as from the government. In some regions the printers' unions also acted as the exclusive hiring agency for their trade, and in this way, they were able to restrict the influx of new workers and to maintain their high wage standards.

This control of the labor market was carried to the extreme in some minor trades, of a handicraft character, as for instance in tile-making in the Cracow district. The tile-makers' union, by its policy of exclusion, succeeded in obtaining very high wages as compared to those prevailing in related trades, and with its numerous restrictions and regulations it came closer to being a guild than a modern trade union.

The economic level and origin of the workers influenced their cultural characteristics. Tile-makers, like masons, were chiefly recruited from the suburban elements with the traditions of artisans and gardeners. Many of them lived in their own little houses in the suburbs observing old suburban customs and enjoying a traditional relative well-being of a somewhat idyllic nature.

Neither the printers nor the tile-makers were a mass element; only a relatively small number of persons worked in each of these trades. This fact, as well as the preservation of many old customs in their organization, also helps to explain the affinity between their unions and the ancient guilds or corporations. It goes without saying that the printers' and tile-makers' unions were not unique—there were many others of this type, but their membership was relatively small.

Unions with a mass membership but equally well organized had a different character. Such were the miners' unions, particularly in the Upper Silesian Basin, that of the founders in the same basin, of a part of the chemical workers (the oil workers who belonged to the same union) and others.

The Polish coal mines, particularly those in Upper Silesia, are among the richest in Europe. The high caloric content of the coal, extensive modern mechanization and relatively large markets all contributed to the high rate of profit in the Silesian mines. Thus the miners here could wage a victorious struggle for better living conditions, which were won with the help of a strong union. In the neighboring Jaworznicki Basin, however, the situation was different: the quality of the coal was considerably inferior, mechanization was far less advanced, and the local miners received lower wages. The frontiers between the Upper Silesian, Cracow and Dombrowa Basins were wage frontiers. Before the First World War, the first belonged to Germany, the second to Austria and the third to Russia. But despite twenty years of Polish independence, the boundaries between those three regions remained wage frontiers, as well as cultural frontiers. The Upper Silesian miner was completely separated from the soil; he was a miner and nothing else. In the Cracow and Dombrowa Basins he often maintained a certain connection with the land, owning a rudimentary farm, or more often a vegetable garden.

Even better off than the Upper Silesian miners were the oil miners and workers in refineries, who belonged to the powerful chemical workers' union. The nature of their industry and their excellent organization brought them high wages. The average oil worker showed wide cultural interests and great organizational discipline.

The Polish oil industry was situated at the foot of the eastern and central Carpathians. There were also refineries in the west. The oil workers led a quiet and relatively comfortable life, a large percentage of them doing farming as well as oil mining, and in comparison with the other workers their wages were high, reaching 500 zlotys a month, while the average wage in Poland was 120 zlotys a month. Oil wells and refineries are generally situated in the villages or in the mountains near small settlements, and life there is less expensive than in the large industrial centers. The oil workers were industrious, well-educated and thrifty; they used their savings to buy a kind of



individual social insurance—a piece of land and a house. Their land holdings usually did not exceed 3 to 6 acres and contained little more than a vegetable garden, with a cow and chickens to supplement the farm. It goes without saying that the oil workers raised food only for themselves, not for sale.

In contrast to the salt miners or even the coal miners, the oil workers had no traditions of their own, for their industry was relatively young. They were thoroughly modern, conscious of the international character of their trade, and many of them had seen a good deal of the world before settling in Poland; more than a few had learned their work in Texas, Baku or Borneo.

The professional groups discussed in this and the previous sections enjoyed the highest living standards among workers, their incomes being higher than the average economic level of the Polish worker. However, the professionals represented a considerable group, and without mentioning them our description of the Polish proletariat as a whole would be inexact.

#### SKILLED SEASONAL WORKERS AND MEDIUM-SKILLED WORKERS

Skilled seasonal workers are obviously worse off economically than skilled workers employed all year round, but their condition is still not of the worst. In Poland this category comprised the masons, carpenters and related trades. The masons' and carpenters' trades have not changed a great deal in recent times, for the technique of construction remained stationary on the continent until the end of the nineteenth century. In such trades employing old techniques, old customs were also preserved, although these were slowly dying away, but many traces of the old artisan and even corporative traditions remained.

In Eastern Europe masons work seasonally, for construction is impossible in the late fall, in winter and even in the early spring. Before 1914 and even after the war, in certain regions masons did not work on Mondays—the observance of the so-called "blue Monday" being widespread—and thus the number of working days was relatively small, and the money earned in a short period had to suffice for the whole year. Thanks to the old trade organization and the solidarity of the workers, the wages however were relatively good. During the period of independence, the Polish cities developed a great deal; the credit and fiscal policies of the government enabled private capitalists

to build, and investments in buildings were deducted from the income tax. Both the high rate of profit on new real estate in Poland, that is to say, on apartment houses built after the war and not subject to the laws for the protection of tenants, and the security of building investments contributed to the activity of the building market and simultaneously enabled the workers to struggle for improved conditions. The construction workers knew that higher wages would not put a brake on the erection of new buildings, but in spite of this, the wages in this trade were lower than those in the oil and metallurgical industries. During a good season the daily earnings of a skilled mason were relatively high: they amounted to 12 or even 14 zlotys (more than \$2.50 at the nominal rate, and much more in terms of purchasing power), but this did not suffice to support him all the year round; therefore during the winter he supplemented his earnings by small trade and small handicrafts. After the First World War, this type of winter occupation began to disappear. In Cracow, for instance, marriages between masons and women workers in the tobacco monopoly were common; the wives had a steady income and a guaranteed pension upon retirement, and their earnings played an important part in the family budget. Like workers in many other categories, they strongly strove to "establish themselves" in their own homes, with their own modest gardens.

Well organized workers of medium skill also constituted a specific social and economic category, among them the metal workers in private factories. The numerous workers in all sorts of metallurgical trades—mechanics, turners and such, generally called by the name of "locksmiths" in Poland—belonged to the well organized metal workers' union; this organization however was unable to secure for its members as many privileges as the printers and miners enjoyed. There were many reasons for this. In Poland, small and medium industrial enterprises, in which many of these workers were employed, were more numerous than big ones. In general the situation of the workers in big enterprises was more favorable, for it was easier to organize them, and their mass struggles were much more effective. It was also easier to create solidarity among the workers in large plants, and solidarity is an important factor in the creation of a strong union. Moreover, large enterprises usually follow a different economic policy and are more profitable. The small and even some of the medium Polish enterprises, on the other hand,

were in a precarious financial condition, and the process of the accumulation of capital primarily affected wages. Lack of cash, debts, high interest on loans, lack of steady and reliable markets, general uncertainty as to credit and solvency also affected the smaller enterprises first, and the employers in their turn made the workers pay for their losses and difficulties. Hence the worker in medium and small enterprises was the victim of the need to accumulate capital, the defects of small enterprises in general, the effects of the depression, and the lack of experience of the management.

The situation in the so-called "lock-smithies," small enterprises managed by former foremen, was most tragic. These workshops chiefly employed young "boys," who were learning their trade (sometimes in a very good school, for these foremen had much experience) but at wages below any norm, and under unfavorable working conditions. The boys were also often compelled to do domestic work.

Many other trades of medium skill were in a condition similar to or even worse than that of the metal workers. The textile industry in the Lodz district is an illustration of this; the wages were low, even in large enterprises, the workers were often miserable, their living standards were low and their dwellings wretched. The string textile unions, it is true, succeeded in obtaining a certain wage level, but the deepening economic depression seriously affected the workers. The Lodz textile industry was originally created for the Russian market, and in the beginning of the nineteenth century its products went as far as China. But after the First World War the Soviet Union was eliminated as a factor in international trade, and the Lodz textile industry lost a large portion of its traditional market. As usual, all the difficulties of the industry were first felt by the workers, and although during the entire period between 1918 and 1939, some branches of the Lodz textile industry prospered and brought in huge profits, the wages of the textile workers still remained at a relatively low level.

#### SMALL HANDICRAFTS—THE "CHALUPNIKS"

A great many workers in Poland were employed in the small handicrafts or as *chalupniks* (home workers). In the United States and England the cheapest manufactured goods, such as suits or shoes, are produced in factories, but in Poland, these

goods were for the most part produced by the artisans and *chalupniks*. The reason for this was that mechanization was difficult in Poland for lack of capital, and labor was relatively cheaper than credits and machines. Thus old-fashioned cobblers successfully competed with shoe factories, and the peasant bought his boots at the fair or ordered them from the local cobbler; in both cases, the boots were handmade from half finished uppers and soles. The artisans thus continued to fulfill their classical function. In certain regions far from the cities, even the potter's wheel still persisted: the bowls and jugs in the peasants' houses were handmade. Similarly, clothing was to a great extent custom made, and the village or small town tailor was an integral element of the population. The same was true of the cartwright and the blacksmith. The cart and the horse were used as a means of transportation in the villages, and the peasant cart was as popular in Poland as the Ford in the United States; the blacksmith and the cartwright played the same role in rural Poland as the gas station in America.

The mechanized baking of bread existed only to a limited extent, and the predominant form of bread-baking was the old-fashioned one, in a simple clay oven. Baking, as well as other branches of the food industry (candy making or sausage making), employed large numbers of masters, journeymen and apprentices.

The wages in these industries were quite varied. A cutter in a first class tailoring establishment sometimes earned five times as much as a poor third-class tailor. In other trades, however, the divergencies were less marked. The artisans, especially the journeymen and apprentices, occupied the lowest rung of the economic ladder. Handicrafts, however, attracted certain workers, because of their peculiar traditions and the possibilities of advancement they afforded, since a handicraftsman could hope some day to set himself up in an independent workshop, as a so-called master, and to expand his business. The artisans were grouped in rudimentary corporations, and were obliged to belong to the Artisans Chambers, which were self-governing institutions with elected officials. These chambers were organized in the years immediately preceding the Second World War and took over many of the old corporative functions. They defended the interests and supervised the activities of their members; they also supervised professional training, and gave examinations for the grades of journeyman and master.

In the cities the handicrafts were, of course, better organized than in the villages.

The size of the artisan workshops varied, from the great "locksmith" establishments that were almost small factories, down to the miserable little basement cobblers' shops. In these small workshops conditions were often bad. There, the master did not differ much from the journeyman, and the apprentice as a rule performed domestic duties. The situation, however, was considerably better in the large shops. In general, working hours were not as strictly observed as in industry and mining. In certain trades the prescribed length of the working day was violated quite regularly, as for instance in the baking industry, in which it often lasted to fourteen hours or more, at the end of the week or before holidays.<sup>1</sup> The artisans were also much more difficult to organize than the factory workers, for purely technical reasons: in factories the workers are concentrated in one place, while the workers in artisan workshops are scattered. Often the masters worked alone, without employing anyone. However, in some instances the masters succeeded in making considerable profits—in which case they ruthlessly exploited their journeymen, who bore all the brunt of the accumulation of capital.

The *chalupniki* were even worse off. They worked at home mostly along with other members of their families for the so-called *nakladca*, the outside employer, who gave them orders for goods and supplied them with raw materials. While the artisan was in direct contact with the market, the *chalupnik* reached the consumer only through the employer, who by taking over the task of selling decreased the *chalupnik's* commercial risks and freed him of real trade duties. But as a result the *chalupnik* was completely dependent upon his employer, whose monopolistic position enabled him to push exploitation to the extreme so that the *chalupniki* were the most exploited class in Poland. Thousands of them worked in the cobbler's, tailor's, hatmaker's and similar trades, and it was they who were responsible for the mass production of cheap shoes, clothing and hats. Actually they produced even more cheaply than the small artisans we have discussed in the foregoing pages. An impoverished cobbler or tailor would cease to run his workshop as an independent business and would become a *chalupnik*. Usually his family helped him in the workshop; more rarely he

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that this also occurred in other European countries.

hired assistants. The *chalupniks* were the poorest of the artisans, only one step away from the unemployed. Thousands worked in the Brzeziny huts near Lodz producing clothing so cheaply that it could be exported to India—their wages were among the lowest in Poland. In Radom and its environs *chalupnik* cobblers who were paid starvation wages produced cheap shoes destined for sale at village fairs. Yet here and there one found exceptions. For instance, a textile *chalupnik* in Zelow near Lodz was better off, however hard his lot, than a sieve-maker from Bilgoraj. But in Zelow there was an old artisan organization with a long tradition.

The laws for the protection of labor did not apply to the *chalupniks*, because they were not wage-laborers, but "independent." They worked from dawn to dusk, just as in the period of the industrial revolution when handicrafts had to compete with industry; they were usually not insured against illness, they were not entitled to unemployment relief, and every legislative effort to give them some sort of protection proved fruitless. Often these *chalupniks* were cobblers in the poorest parts of the suburbs, or Jewish shoemakers or tailors. There were many Jewish workers among the small handicraftsmen and the *chalupniks*, and in some branches the Jews were predominant, as for instance in hatmaking.

#### THE UNSKILLED WORKERS

The unskilled workers were naturally paid the lowest wages among the industrial workers. In the 1930's the unskilled workers' wage scales were based on the wages of the workers employed by the Labor Fund (the Polish equivalent of the WPA), and it was difficult to find workers willing to accept less, for they could always find employment with the Labor Fund. The unskilled workers were fully protected by the general labor laws, and in this respect were better off than the home workers or small handicraftsmen.

Many unskilled workers were seasonal, as for instance in the ceramics industry. The brick factories which paid the lowest wages dismissed a large part of the workers during the winter season. It may be asked, how these workers could survive at all, since their wages when they worked were so very low. The answer to this question can be found in the peasant origins of the Polish unskilled workers. They were chiefly recruited from peasants with small holdings, who could not live on their land

because they did not have enough of it, and for that reason they worked in the cities or neighboring factories, while their wives or children, or they themselves after working hours, cultivated their tiny patrimony. The landless peasants and the peasants with small land holdings constituted the Polish industrial reserve army. The Polish villages were overpopulated, and it was estimated <sup>1</sup> that Poland had a surplus population of four to eight million. Of course such estimates are difficult to make, because the number of surplus people depends on the type of agriculture that predominates and its productivity. Yet it is an undeniable fact that an immense number of village youths who earned a modest living on the land and worked part of the year could easily have been dispensed with in the villages and the work of their hands replaced by minor technical improvements.

The surplus population found an outlet in emigration to America. After emigration to the New World was restricted and for all practical purposes forbidden, emigration to France in the years following the First World War partly saved the situation. But the great depression resulted in the closing of France to immigrants, causing an ever increasing influx of poor peasants to the cities which could not absorb them. The tension between the newly arrived workers from the countryside and the city workers sometimes gave rise to conflicts. The former were used to a lower living standard, lived therefore much more cheaply, and often received assistance from the village; still more important, they often lived in the village and commuted. As a result, they were willing to work for lower wages, which sometimes led to quarrels in the factories, where workers of village origin constituted the large groups of unskilled workers, as they did on construction projects and in transportation. In the Cracow region, the skilled mechanic or mason called his unskilled assistant simply the "peasant."

#### THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER—THE "FORNAL"

The hired agricultural laborers can be divided into two main groups—the day laborers and the *fornals*. The day laborers worked for a daily wage, in accordance with the ordinary contract, and were mostly small peasants, or village youths who did not find enough work on their fathers' holdings. The wages of the agricultural laborers were lower than those of the industrial

<sup>1</sup> Józef Poniatowski: "Excess Population in the Village" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1936.

workers, but in the village, money was worth more; the village suffered from lack of turnover capital even more than the city.

In contrast to the day laborer, the *fornal* made a contract for a whole year, traditionally from the "holidays to the holidays," from one Christmas to the next. He received a small sum in cash and the rest of his wages in kind, such as grain, potatoes, milk, or wood, and besides this, given a one-room dwelling and sometimes a small garden.

The *fornals* were the dynamic working class element in the villages, and their strikes were the terror of the big landowners. The hard lot of the *fornals* was proverbial. It was described by the great Polish writer Stefan Zeromski in his "*slowo o Bandosie*."

"Beyond the Pilica beyond the Vistula, in the 'wheat country,' the sun beats down on the bandos,<sup>1</sup> bent from dawn to dark. Hard is this day-long labor in the stifling heat on the master's fields! Sleep in the hot summer night is as short as the flicker of an eyelid. From early dawn, the harsh and noisy bandos song floats over the fields as the sickles fall:

He's well off, He's well off, who knocks  
someone on the head,  
But he's better off still who gouges out  
someone's eyes . . .

"The bandos' stinking sweat has poured down on his tattered sackcloth and his coarse russet coat for centuries. Vermin have devoured him, mud has covered him and mysterious diseases have beset him from all sides, so that his master's baby could flourish and have a healthy little body and beautifully curled hair. His knees dig deep furrows in the stony floors of high churches, his lips, by dint of kissing, made new wounds on the pierced feet of our Lord Jesus at the church portals, so that his highness, the master, might sit before God's altar in his pew, stroking his beautiful moustache and looking proudly and securely upon his humble serfs.

"Such has our republic been for centuries.

"Many hundreds of years ago a Polish poet lamented the miserable fate of the reapers:

Little sun, beautiful eye, eye of the  
beautiful day,  
You do not have the ways of our overseer:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Bandos* is another term for *fornal*.



You rise when your time comes, while he  
would fain  
That you rise at midnight, little sun. . . .

"Will the Polish bandos ever succeed in improving his lot by merely wearing out his knees on the stones? Will he wrest it from the Lord Jesus' nail-pierced feet by his kisses? Will he draw it out of the endless stretches of the road between his wretched hut and the distant wheat country with his swollen feet? Will he tear it with his scythe out of the fragrant rustling grass; will he cut it with his diligent sickle from the spring-corn of his sacred homeland? When will the lament of the reapers cease, the lament that soars above the morning dew from generation to generation? When will the Polish reapers bend down toward the ripe grain and, with the wide stroke of might, take hold of the harvest of rustling grass? Not mine, not yours, but our own, our native harvest . . ."

The *fornal* is the landless peasant laboring on another's field, who does not own even his own miserable hovel; he is the negation of the peasant condition, for to be a peasant one must have one's own land and one's own house, be it the most modest and the poorest of houses. And the *fornal* owns nothing. What counts in the village is possession of one's land, for a man without a plot of land is not respected in the community. The *fornal* found some measure of protection in the agricultural laborers' unions; but the work of the trade unions in the villages was exceedingly difficult.

#### THE UNEMPLOYED

During the depression a new class of people arose, quite different from all the others; these were the unemployed. To be sure, there was a transient element in this class, for its fortunate members who found employment automatically passed into the working class from an economic, social, and, not the least important, psychological point of view. But in certain cases unemployment was of a permanent character, and many young people never experienced the sorrows and joys of labor. Thus, despite its partly transitory character, unemployment created a new social type.

The unemployed had different economic interests from the employed, because what he wanted above all was work, not higher wages. This went so far that in certain cities separate trade unions of unemployed workers were created to defend the

special interests of this group. Those who were later employed by the Labor Fund struggled for higher wages and protection in their new temporary trade, losing interest in their old trade, and thus loosened their ties with their old trade union.<sup>1</sup> Constant looking for work, waiting, temporary periods of employment, wanderings—all these contributed to the creation of a specific mental state and behavior that can best be described as "a condition of social feverishness." Under these circumstances the time formerly spent by the worker in the workshop seemed to him blissful, compared with the spectacle of the misery of his family, the hopelessness of waiting, and the indifference of society, all of which combined to create an atmosphere of despair.

The interruption of their normal course of life throws the unemployed out of gear, and following a law of psychic self-defense, they sometimes try to create for themselves the illusion of a regular life. In 1931 I attended an international conference of labor educators in Berlin, where one of the delegates reporting on the educational training of the unemployed told of a highly skilled stenographer who attended a course in stenography. When asked what was his purpose in doing this he explained: "This course gives me the illusion of being employed. Once again I have to get up early in the morning and hurry to go to work. The atmosphere in my home is changed. We have once more the daily rhythm to which we were accustomed for so many years."

Some of the unemployed took matters into their own hands and won their right to live despite the written laws and amid the general indifference; in certain regions of Upper Silesia, in the Dombrowa Basin and the Cracow Basin, there were coal deposits only a few yards below the surface, and here unemployed miners dug coal on their own. Starvation and misery have certain limits, and some of the more enterprising young miners began to bring the black riches up to the surface of the earth without employers. I saw many such shafts in the Jaworznicki region, which were called "misery shafts." The miner dug the earth with the assistance of his wife and children, with primitive tools, ever deeper and deeper. He went down the shaft in a pail attached to a rope, instead of in the shaft elevator. On the "misery shafts" there were no eight-hour laws, no bathing fa-

---

<sup>1</sup> In the section entitled "Hunger and Unemployment," page 85, the reader will find a study of the new social type created by unemployment.

cilities, no protective legislation for women and children. The miners worked in the shafts at the risk of their lives, for their diggings were haphazard, and often collapsed; or else gas explosions buried the unfortunate workers alive. The "misery shafts" began to spring up in considerable numbers and gradually some kind of organization began perforce to develop in these coal-fields. Conflicts arose among neighboring shafts, intruders would break in, and then the "misery miners," unaided by any government agency, organized for self-defense and the maintenance of order. Soon peasant carts loaded with coal from the "misery shafts" began to roll toward the villages and towns, sometimes to quite distant ones. This coal was cheaper than that from the regular mines, for transport on carts belonging to impoverished small peasants was cheaper than transport by rail, nor was any reloading necessary, since the peasant brought the coal directly to the consumer's cellar.

In certain regions, the "misery miners" began to seriously compete with the retail coal merchants; the coal operators looked with concern at these goings-on and the authorities were helpless. Violent incidents multiplied. Yet how could the unemployed miners be removed from these improvised shafts without being given other work? Removing them from the "misery shafts" meant creating serious disturbances and driving unfortunate people already plunged in misery to despair; it meant arousing public opinion against the authorities.

In other directions, too, the unemployed displayed great strength of character in their struggle against fate, and great honesty too; for as a class they avoided crime, despite their tragic situation; all they wanted was work.

Unemployment radically changes a man's way of life; the unemployed became quite different from the employed workers. Of course they belong to the proletariat, but they form a special and numerous category within it, and in the twentieth century they formed a social class *sui generis*, beyond the normal pale of society, so to speak. For them the relations of dependence so essential to all social processes were changed; the employed were dependent upon the employer, but the unemployed were dependent upon the state which gave them relief or work. The state is never very generous, and as a result, the unemployed in moments of despair are inclined to join with any element which is trying to change the existing order into a new one that would be favorable to them. The chief goal becomes change, not the

realization of any definite political program, and such changes require violent means, so that the unemployed tend to become a prey to extremist mass movements that seek to produce quick and violent changes. The nature of this movement thus becomes a secondary matter, and the essential thing is a change, any change in their miserable condition.

#### THE LUMPENPROLETARIAT

At the bottom of society in Poland, as everywhere else, was the so-called Lumpenproletariat, composed of a mixture of *déclassé* elements, unfortunates incapable of living in society, and cast out beyond the pale either through their own fault or the fault of the social order. This is not a stable mass, and it is unorganized; it is composed above all of tramps, minor criminals, beggars, prostitutes, and a section of the unemployed who have reached the very depths of misery. The Lumpenproletariat is a product of industrialization and urbanization.

The Polish Lumpenproletariat was relatively less numerous than that in highly industrialized Western Europe, and had some original features, which is mainly due to the fact that Poland is an agricultural country; as a result there were types of Lumpenproletarians that practically do not exist anywhere else. First, there were the village tramps or beggars, often former peasants, landless or possessing only tiny holdings, who took up the beggar's staff in their old age and wandered from city to city, living like the cripples and blind men who mumbled prayers and collected alms near the churches. Sometimes young boys, too, ran away from the villages, unable or unwilling to bear the oppression and heavy work. They would wander in the cities, do occasional odd jobs or occasionally commit minor crimes.

I carried out a field investigation of tramps in the cities and villages, and my impression was that the traditional type of village beggar living in the shadow of the church was dying out. Tramps and beggars, however, form only a small fraction of the Lumpenproletariat, whose decisive element is the minor criminal and city tramp. This type was a by-product of industrialization, less numerous in little industrialized Poland than in Germany, for instance, where tramping had its own traditions reaching back to the time when handicrafts predominated.

During periods of unemployment and general misery the tramps multiplied, and workers wandered to centers they

thought were less affected by unemployment, only to be disappointed in their hope of finding work. I often encountered unemployed youths migrating in the direction of Gdynia, the new Polish port on the Baltic Sea, and a kind of Polish El Dorado. Many young workers thought that in Gdynia they would find employment or an opportunity to get out into the wide world where it would be easier to earn their daily bread. Generally, such attempts ended in exhausting wanderings from place to place, and the unemployed supported themselves by occasional work for well-to-do peasants. Under these conditions criminal elements mingled with the mass of unfortunate migrant unemployed.

#### SUMMARY

The Polish proletariat—industrial and agricultural—is not uniform, but is composed of various social categories, which is true also of the structure of the proletariat in other countries.

The economic structure of Polish industry was reflected in the social structure of the workers. Highly industrialized western Poland was the birthplace of the industrial workers. The homeworkers and artisans were typical of the periphery of the textile and clothing centers; they existed mostly in central and eastern Poland, and were almost non-existent in the regions where heavy industry flourished. Among the individual categories of workers there were sometimes wide economic and cultural differences.

The differentiation of the social strata is a fact which must be emphasized. *To consider the working class or proletariat as an undifferentiated and uniform group would be erroneous; on the other hand, it would be equally erroneous to disregard the coherence of the various categories which makes of them one whole, one stratum, although a differentiated stratum.*

*Part Two*

STANDARD OF LIVING



## The Structure of Polish Wages

### THE BASIC WAGES <sup>1</sup>

To give average wage figures does not define the living conditions and cultural opportunities of the proletariat, nor does it give a true picture or even a summary notion of reality. As we have pointed out, economically the proletariat is not a uniform mass, and variations in income predetermine the social and economic possibilities of different groups. A survey of Polish wages and the number of workers receiving them will illustrate the many and varying levels of working class income.

The table shown on page 46 is based upon a survey of workers' earnings made in 1933. It did not include all categories, but only the basic industrial categories, and was based on the number of employed workers, not on representative groups. Unlike the census of 1931, this survey did not include all the hired laborers; however, as it included the most important categories,

<sup>1</sup> Note on purchasing power.

In 1931 the American dollar was quoted in Warsaw at 8.9 zlotys; in 1934 at 5.3 zlotys. The corresponding figures for the pound sterling were 40.5 and 26.8. However, the conversion of Polish wages into American dollars gives a false picture, for living costs in America and England were higher. The purchasing power of a Polish zloty was a little less than that of a German mark and almost equal to that of a Mexican peso.

Comparative indices of food costs in October, 1938, according to the International Labor Office, Montreal, Canada, are as follows:

<i>Poland</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>Canada</i>
100	131	180	141
76	100	...	...
56	...	100	...
71	...	...	100

(*Annuaire des Statistiques du Travail, 1941, Bureau International du Travail, Montreal, 1941*).

The reader should keep these figures in mind when analyzing the tables reproduced in this chapter.



TABLE I

DIVISION OF WAGES IN POLAND ON THE BASIS OF ONE WEEK IN 1933<sup>1</sup>

<i>Weekly wages in zlotys</i>	<i>Percentage of workers (of a total of 1,217,000)</i>
10 or less.....	22.7
10-20.....	29.7
20-30.....	20.0
30-40.....	11.6
40-50.....	6.7
50-60.....	3.8
60-70.....	2.2
70-80.....	1.3
80 or more.....	2.0

such as miners, metal workers, workers in medium and big industries, *chalupniki*, etc., it gives a fair idea of the earnings of the core of the Polish proletariat.

Table I shows the divergence in wages which is the expression of the differentiated character of the proletariat as a social group. The most numerous groups received the lowest income, and according to our table, more than 72 per cent of the workers earned less than 30 zlotys a week. Clearly the wages of the majority of Polish workers were low, and in most categories even very low. Thus according to this survey, made in 1933, more than half of the Polish workers earned at most 80 zlotys a month; 31.6% earned between 80 and 160 a month; 16% earned more than 160 a month, while the best paid group that earned more than 320 a month contained only 2% of the workers.

The region where wages were highest (during periods of full employment) was industrial Upper Silesia. In 1932, the average coal miner's wage there was approximately 60 zlotys a week. But in this case, as in so many others, the wages alone do not give the complete picture. In the first place, the cost of living in industrial regions like Upper Silesia was higher; and during periods of unemployment, forced furloughs were instituted, so that in many mines the number of working days per annum was

<sup>1</sup>Tadeusz Czajkowski: "An Appraisal of the Scale of Workers' Earnings in Poland," *Labor Statistics*, V. XIII, 4, 1934, and *Little Statistical Yearbook*, 1935, Cf. Ludwik Landau: "Polish Wages in Relation to Economic Development," Warsaw, 1933 (in Polish).

thus reduced. Workers were also employed for a few months, and then replaced by unemployed. As a result, the annual income of an Upper Silesian worker was often considerably lower than would appear from his daily or weekly wage rate.

On the whole, however, the Upper Silesian workers were relatively well off, and their economic standards were not much lower than those of Western European workers. Of course, there was no such thing as a uniform wage level in Upper Silesia either; there were economic differences among the various categories, and there were even exceptionally privileged groups whose individual and special interests separated them from the whole of the proletariat. Such a group, for instance, were certain workers of the Hohenlohe Works, which started a project designed to give model homes to the workers and enhance the value of the company's property. These works sponsored the creation of a group of landlord workers, on the principle of a "little house with a little garden" for each worker. They granted credits for the building of small houses containing several apartments to "selected" workers, at the same time guaranteeing them steady employment. The purpose of this policy was to insure the repayment of the building loans, for a worker who has an income from steady employment and, in addition, receives rent from his tenants, could easily amortize his loan. "As a result of this policy of the Works," writes Zebalski, "there arose a stratum of small apartment house owners—workers who drew income from rent that came from worker tenants."<sup>1</sup>

Did the common interests of all miners and founders give these "worker-landlords" an understanding of the situation of their comrades? Not at all—the worker-landlords were ruthless, typical exploiters. "The usual rent for a room and kitchen in miners' houses is 7.5 to 15 zlotys; the worker-landlord asks 25 to 30 zlotys for the same lodging, and 50 or even 70 zlotys for a two-room lodging. And his tenants are not allowed to make use of the little garden, because the landlord cultivates and uses it exclusively for himself."

During periods of reduced employment the Hohenlohe Works protected these "landlords," because if they had been dismissed they would not have been able to repay their loans, or at least would have found it difficult.

This is, of course, an exceptional case, but it is worth mentioning as an illustration of the differentiation of working class

<sup>1</sup> Adam Zebalski: "Workers' Settlements" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1935, p. 45.

conditions and it shows how necessary it is to avoid sweeping generalizations.

Permanence of employment plays an essential part in the worker's life. Hence, as we have already noted, the best jobs were those in government-owned enterprises. The basic wage was not very high<sup>1</sup> but job security was offered. Thus the situation of the workers employed by the government was better than that of the workers in private enterprises who earned similar wages, but were denied the special privileges granted to government workers (described in the preceding chapter).

#### THE ADDITIONAL INCOME OF THE WORKERS' FAMILIES

In addition to the wages of the head of the family, workers' families sometimes had the following additional sources of income:

- (a) income of other members of the family (wife, children).
- (b) income from individual garden plot.
- (c) a privately owned house (although this is not a source of income, it is an important asset in the workers' budget).
- (d) income from tenants.
- (e) income from work on the side.

If the family head's wages are high, it is less important that his wife or children work; conversely, if his wages are low, this fact is an incentive for the employment of adolescents and women. Certain industries only, however, employed women and children, such as the textile industry. The mining industry could not employ them, because the use of children and women under the surface of the earth was forbidden by the Polish labor code. As a result of these differences, women and children were unevenly distributed in the various industries. This can be seen from the following table which is taken from Jan Piekalkiewicz's: "Report on the Composition of the Working Population in Poland," Warsaw, 1934 (in Polish):

TABLE II

#### WIVES EMPLOYED IN POLISH INDUSTRY (ESTIMATES) 1931

<i>Wives Active</i>		<i>Wives Inactive</i>		<i>Percentage of Active Wives</i>	
Mining and Metallurgy	Industry and Trade	Mining and Metallurgy	Industry and Trade	Mining and Metallurgy	Industry and Trade
2,274	77,720	142,968	616,370	1.6	11.2

<sup>1</sup> It was from 160 to 250 zlotys a month (average for 1935). This amounted to from \$33.00 to \$44.00 depending upon the rate of exchange, but meant much more in terms of purchasing power than in America.

These figures are based upon data obtained from only certain representative sections of the population, nevertheless the low percentage of wives employed in mining and metallurgy shows that the degree of employment of women, and the wives' share in earning the family income, depend upon the nature of the work and the level of wages. According to Piekalkiewicz, these figures reflect the real conditions, considering the large number of wives taken into account, especially in the coal basins. In Lodz—according to the data of the Institute for Social Problems quoted by Piekalkiewicz—the percentage of employed wives was 36.4, which can be explained by the structure of the textile industry which employs many women.

The investigations made by the Institute for Social Problems of the living standards of the population of some Warsaw working class districts in 1934 are instructive on the question of the employment of wives and children:<sup>1</sup>

"Among the wives in couples constituting the center of the family, 20% earned some income. This is a high percentage, and it must be remembered that, in addition to those who have a steady employment and were taken into account in these statistics, there are frequent cases of occasional earnings: from laundering and cleaning, sewing, embroidering, etc. In 2% of cases the wives earned more than the husbands, and were thus, in the sense accepted here (that is economically, not sociologically), the family heads. Exceptionally low was the percentage of earning wives in Brudno and Pelcowizna—7%; these districts are largely inhabited by railroad employees who have higher, and above all, steadier incomes; the connection between the work of the wife and the uncertainty of the husband's position, and the significance of the wife's work as a sort of insurance against the possibility of the family's finding itself without any means of subsistence, are clearly indicated here.

"The proportion of children working and looking for work is not large—12%; but if we disregard children under twelve who obviously are incapable of earning anything, about half of those above this age are earning. In this respect, too, the railroad employees' district differs from the others: here only one-third of the older children are employed (or seek employment)."

The conditions prevailing in Lodz are characteristic. Among those workers' families which spend over 300 zlotys a month

<sup>1</sup> Ludwik Landau: "Unemployment and Living Standards of the Population of the Warsaw Working Class Districts" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1936.

(nominally more than \$56.00; much more in terms of purchasing power), the income of the other members of the family amounts to 40.5% of the total family income. This relatively high figure is explained by the fact that Lodz is a textile center, where the extent of the wife's and children's earnings is relatively greater in the family budget than in other districts. In the Dombrowa Basin, a center of mining and heavy industry, the budget remains at the level of the family head's income, for heavy industry and mining do not employ many women and employ considerably fewer young workers than the textile and clothing industries.

Income from farming as a side occupation of factory workers assumes importance in certain regions, especially where the factories are far from the cities and the industries are relatively new. Here, workers are recruited from among the peasants, mostly small peasants, who after the day's work in the factory cultivate their own little farm. There are also more owners of small houses in such districts drawing a certain income from tenants, although this income is often used to pay mortgages.

In times of depression, unemployment also affects the employed, upon whom often falls the burden of supporting relatives without work, and thus the percentage of income contributed by family members other than the head of the house is decreased.

The family is the main support of the unemployed, and family ties are strengthened in periods of unemployment. The investigations of the Institute for Social Problems again give us a statistical picture of the situation. "Our investigations have shown," we read in Landau's book quoted above, "that the number of persons affected by the catastrophe of unemployment cannot be estimated if we assume that the unemployed have to support the same number of non-working family members as the workers as a whole. The number of persons completely deprived of means of subsistence as a result of unemployment is smaller, because in many cases unemployed belong to families in which some members are employed. The number of persons generally affected by unemployment is much larger, as a result of the distribution of the burden of unemployment in working class families. According to our investigations, almost half of all working class families (45%) counted some unemployed persons. Among these families, 25% were entirely unemployed,

while 20% assumed the burden of support of the unemployed members. About 30% of workers belonged to families in which someone was unemployed; thus these workers partly carried the burden of unemployment. Our investigations dispel the legend that these workers who keep their jobs enjoy general advantages from the higher value of their real wages resulting from the lower prices in periods of unemployment. These workers are burdened with the support of the unemployed members of their families. The existence of family assistance for the unemployed supplies a partial answer to the perplexing question: What is such a huge mass of unemployed living on in this fifth year of the world depression? This answer is: it is living by lowering the standards of the employed workers."

#### THE BUDGET OF THE POLISH WORKER

A comparison of workers' budgets gives perhaps a more complete picture of the workers' situation than the mere analysis of wages. Perhaps the most characteristic item in the budget is the relation of food expenditures to other expenditures. As the well-being of the family grows, the percentage of the family income used for food decreases. This phenomenon appears with great regularity and is known as the Engel law, a very useful device in international comparisons of working class living standards.

In 1927, the Institute of Social Economy in Warsaw investigated workers' budgets in three Polish industrial centers: the Dombrowa Basin, Warsaw and Lodz. The Engel law is confirmed by a comparison of the food budgets of various income categories of the Polish workers:

TABLE III <sup>1</sup>

AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENDITURES ON FOOD IN LODZ, IN PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES (IN 1927)

<i>Income</i>	<i>Group I</i> (less than 150 zł.)	<i>Group II</i> (150 to 200)	<i>Group III</i> (200 to 250)	<i>Group IV</i> (250 to 300)	<i>Group V</i> (300 to 350)	<i>Group VI</i> (above 350)
Number of families . . .	11	16	6	3	2	1
Expenditures for food .	73.0	68.2	62.6	61.8	51.0	47.8

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Social Economy: "The Conditions of Working Class Life in Warsaw, Lodz and the Dombrowa Basin in the Light of the Field Studies of 1927" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1929, p. 97

THE BUDGET AND WAGES OF THE POLISH WORKER AS  
COMPARED WITH THE WORKERS OF OTHER  
COUNTRIES

International comparisons of workers' living conditions are difficult for many reasons. Apart from cultural differences which influence the economic life of the family in the form of different needs, it must be emphasized that average figures generally used in such comparisons do not give a complete picture because of the differentiation of the working class, and, for instance, one would never learn from them that unskilled workers in Poland sometimes earned ten times less than skilled workers. A comparison of nominal wages, while it is the simplest method, would lead to erroneous conclusions, because the purchasing power of money varies in different countries. Theoretically, the best method is a comparison of real wages, but the technique of constructing the real wage is far from perfect, hence even this method does not give satisfactory results.

However, with the help of the Engel law, we can compare the economic level of the workers; we know that the greater the proportion of expenditures on food the worse the economic situation of the given family. However, here, too, certain cultural differences must be taken into account. For instance, the consumption of wine by the French workers by no means plays the same role as the consumption of vodka by the Polish workers; it corresponds more to the Polish worker's habit of drinking coffee during working hours. Thus the items for alcohol cannot be compared in the budgets of the Polish and French workers. Another shortcoming of studying family budgets results from the fact that it is impossible to study them on a large scale, that the representational principle must be applied. We know by experience that the groups which are investigated have been among those whose earnings are higher. We shall, how-

TABLE IV<sup>1</sup>  
NOMINAL WAGES, COMPARED. YEAR: 1929

England.....100	Denmark.....122	Austria.....53
United States...259	Ireland.....106	Italy.....51
Canada.....204	Holland.....85	Poland.....51
Australia.....173	Germany.....82	Spain.....46
Sweden.....122	France.....56	Esthonia.....32

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Landau: "Polish Wages in Relation to Economic Development," *op. cit.*

ever, try to compare the living standards of the Polish workers with that of workers in other countries, using all data: nominal wages, real wages, and budgets, in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible.

With regard to nominal wages, the Polish workers belong to the lowest groups.

With regard to real wages (based on purchasing power), the workers of the Polish cities belong to the group of Eastern European workers, the lowest on the Continent.

TABLE V<sup>1</sup>

COMPARISON OF REAL WAGES IN WARSAW AND THE MOST IMPORTANT CITIES IN EUROPE AND AMERICA IN 1927-28

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Wage Level in July, 1927</i>	<i>Wage Level in July, 1928</i>
Warsaw.. . . . .	110	100
Lodz. . . . .	113	106
Vienna. . . . .	110	102
Rome. . . . .	118	104
Prague. . . . .	126	107
Milan. . . . .	141	111
Paris. . . . .	144	132
Berlin. . . . .	182	167
Stockholm. . . . .	251	200
London. . . . .	272	239
Philadelphia. . . . .	485	428

TABLE VI

THE STRUCTURE OF FAMILY BUDGETS OF WORKERS IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES<sup>2</sup>

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Heat and Light</i>	<i>Clothing</i>	<i>Misc.</i>
Poland. . . . .	1928	100	60.5%	4.7%	4.4%	15.2%	15.2%
Group I. . . . .	"	"	68.3%	5.3%	4.9%	12.1%	9.4%
Group II. . . . .	"	"	63.1%	5.1%	4.8%	13.3%	13.7%
Group III. . . . .	"	"	59.5%	3.8%	4.1%	15.3%	17.3%
Group IV. . . . .	"	"	50.9%	4.7%	3.8%	19.9%	20.7%
Czechoslovakia. . . . .	1927	"	56.3%	3.8%	4.7%	13.2%	22.0%
Denmark. . . . .	1927	"	40.4%	10.3%	6.2%	12.0%	31.1%
Holland. . . . .	1923 to 1924	"	42.2%	12.9%	6.2%	9.1%	29.6%
Germany. . . . .	1927 to 1928	"	45.3%	10.0%	3.6%	12.7%	28.4%
Norway. . . . .	1927 to 1928	"	44.2%	10.9%	4.4%	14.2%	26.3%

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Stanislaw Rychlinski: "Wages and Income of Industrial Workers Between 1918 and 1928" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> From the "Concise Statistical Yearbook" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1935.



A comparison of budgets shows that the Polish worker spent a high proportion of his income on food. This proportion was among the highest in Europe, which shows that the standard of living was among the lowest.

#### GENERAL REMARKS

Our statistical material shows that the Polish wages were lower than those in the west of Europe, England, the United States and Canada. But it must be kept in mind that Poland was one of the Eastern European countries, in which the wages and economic standards were for many reasons lower than in the west. A comparison with countries situated to the east and south of Poland would show that the Polish workers were often better off than their neighbors. They were better off than the Soviet Russian workers, the Hungarian or the Yugoslav workers. This does not mean, however, that the condition of the majority of Polish workers was satisfactory. To the contrary it means only that the living standards of Central and Eastern European workers were very low.

On the basis of statistics published by the International Labor Office<sup>1</sup> after converting all the figures into American dollars, we obtain the following picture of the average wages per hour in 1938:

Poland .....	14.8 cents (U.S.A.)
Hungary .....	13.2 "
Latvia .....	9.5 "
Esthonia .....	8.4 "

The daily wage of the Yugoslav worker in 1937 was 52.2 cents, of the Polish worker—93.1 cents.

There is unfortunately no data which would permit us to compare the real wages in these countries.

<sup>1</sup> The following figures were obtained from computations based on the op. cit., *Annuaire des Statistiques du Travail*, 1941.

## Labor Legislation in Poland<sup>1</sup>

Just before the resurrection of Poland in 1918, the Polish Labor movement was active in all three parts (Austrian, German and Russian) fighting for labor legislation. After the Allied victory, at the beginning of 1919, Polish representatives took an active part in the Socialist International Conference at Bern, where the draft of a labor charter was prepared. This charter included an eight-hour day, a weekly rest of 36 hours, a six-hour day for children between 16 and 18 years of age, a system of social insurances, the right to belong to unions, government, employment agencies and a permanent committee to enforce the application of international labor legislation. This charter probably influenced the preparation of general principles in Article 427 of the Peace Treaty, at the close of part 13 of the Treaty, known as the Labor Charter.

As early as 1918, a very strong struggle for labor protection was led by the Polish Socialist Party and Polish trade unions in Poland itself. In the Manifesto of Lublin issued by the first People's Government of Poland, on November 7, 1918, the eight-hour day was declared, and immediately after the organization of the Polish state, in the first Polish parliament—Sejm—the initiative in the work of social legislation was taken by the

<sup>1</sup> The labor laws in Poland were published in the official Law Journal (*Dziennik Ustaw*). A complete collection of the labor law with commentaries was published by Jozef Bloch: "Polish Social Legislation" (in Polish), Warsaw, 1938, fourth edition.

A very useful little book in English is "Workmen's Protective Legislation in Poland, 20 Years Cooperation with the International Labor Office" (with a preface by Jan Stanczyk, Polish Minister of Labor), Congress of Polish Trade Unions, London, 1941. "The International Labor Code," Montreal, 1941, published by the International Labor Office, supplies more accurate guidance in this matter. The development of the ILO is presented in the "Origins of the International Labor Organization," edited by James T. Shotwell, Columbia University Press, New York, 1934.

Polish Socialists, who were well represented. In the first period between 1919 and 1924 basic labor laws such as the eight-hour day, the guarantee of the weekly rest, the regulation of the employment of women and juveniles, holidays with pay, social insurance, industrial hygiene and safety rules, the creation of government employment agencies, trade union rights and legislation concerning disputes among the farm laborers were laid down, and the body of labor legislation continued to be improved and enlarged until about 1930. There was close collaboration between Poland and the International Labor Organization. Many conventions of the International Labor Organization were ratified by Poland and these exercised an undeniable influence upon Polish labor legislation. On the other hand, the great depression had left its mark on Polish industry, and the struggle against the labor movement continued. For this reason, during the 1930's certain labor laws were amended in a way that was disadvantageous for the worker: for example, the working week was extended from 46 to 48 hours, at the same time as health insurance was instituted. But on the whole, the great body of Polish labor legislation built up through years of struggle remained intact. This legislation protected the basic rights of the worker in a general sense; it consisted not merely of one or two laws granting them a shorter work day or providing special protection for women, but was an elaborate series of laws protecting all the vital interests of the workers. This all-embracing legislation was the valuable fruit of the struggle of the trade unions in the factories and mines, and of the work of the Polish Socialist Party in the Polish parliament. It protected the worker against the misery arising from sickness, accident, unemployment, and old-age. Sir William Beveridge in his famous report "Social Insurances and Allied Services," writes "Taking all 30 countries together, 20 have compulsory sickness insurance, 24 have some form of contributory pensions, 8 have unemployment insurance. Three countries only, among the 30—New Zealand, Bulgaria, and Poland—make provision against all three risks of sickness, old age and unemployment. That is to say, three countries only aim at covering all the principal forms of social insecurity as fully as Britain."<sup>1</sup>

The Poles had instituted compulsory health insurance many years before France and the allowances in France were much

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Beveridge: "Social Insurances and Allied Services," Appendix F, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1942, p. 289.

less than those in Poland. The establishment of social insurance was almost the first act of the first Polish parliament, and throughout the period of independence, the social security system in Poland was a living and vital institution. The health insurance system covered Poland with a network of hospitals and clinics in which the country was sadly lacking due to the destruction wrought by the long war. Prophylaxis was an important part of the social insurance services and much was done to fight tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and trachoma. Special health centers were set up where everyone, whether he was insured or not, could seek advice. The whole system was based on self-government and was directed by councils composed of employers and workers elected in general elections from among those who were insured. These elections were taken very seriously and stimulated the interest in social insurance. In many of these councils the trade unionists and Socialists were in the majority. When in about 1930, the Polish regime took drastic measures to fight the labor movement and the Polish Socialist Party, this mechanism of self-government was suspended.

All the branches of social insurance were directed by a Central Office of Social Security in Warsaw. Right until the last day of the Polish Republic, this central office was active in the field of research. It created a special institute, an Institute for Social Research, which published very important reports concerning unemployment, the condition of the workers and working youth, the situation in the villages, industrial hygiene, safety, and so on.

Polish labor legislation also gave special protection and privileges to intellectual workers. The manual workers had one week vacations, the intellectuals, one month; the dismissal notice for manual workers was two weeks, for intellectuals three months. The difference in benefits applied also to pensions, old age insurance, etc. It is noteworthy that while the manual workers fought for better conditions for themselves, they did not envy the intellectuals or object to these differences in treatment.

Certainly, the Polish labor legislation and social security system were not without their bad points. The social security administration had various loopholes, and insured people were sometimes dissatisfied with their treatment and so on. But this was because the whole idea of social security was relatively new and there was a lack of experience in administering it. The eight-hour-day law was violated by the employers, especially

in certain districts as in Lodz, and in small handicraft shops. But, nevertheless, labor inspectors, trade unions and the press fought against this, and violation of the eight-hour day by an employer was a criminal offense. The labor inspectors worked diligently, although their number was not sufficient; they were not people who reveled in red tape or left their offices the minute the clock struck five, but in spite of this, they could not supervise their whole area. The courage of some of them must be recognized, for they did not hesitate to fight publicly those employers who abused the law, and to write pamphlets and books against them; this happened in the famous Lodz case, where the woman labor inspector, Halina Krachelska, wrote a booklet about the abuse of the eight-hour day in the textile plants, which was widely commented upon.

With all its minor deficiencies, however, the Polish social security system and the Polish labor legislation constitute a cornerstone to which the Polish worker can return after this war when he starts the work of rebuilding a democratic state from the ashes of war and occupation. And the system is not outmoded; it needs only to be improved.

## TRADE UNIONS

When the Polish State was organized, the rights of the trade unions were secured, and as early as 1919, the first decrees on this question were promulgated. The constitution of the Polish Republic of March 17, 1921, guaranteed the right of association to all citizens. Under Polish law, the agricultural workers had the same rights of organization as the industrial workers, and Poland also ratified the convention concerning the rights of association of agricultural workers which was adopted at the International Labor Conference in Geneva on October 26, 1921. This convention was ratified by Poland in 1924 but prior legislation in that country had already granted the rights embodied in this convention.<sup>1</sup> The trade unions had exclusive rights to conclude collective agreements, and they also sub-

---

<sup>1</sup> These decrees were issued in Poland in the official Law Journal which was at the beginning called *Dziennik Praw* and later, *Dziennik Ustaw*. We will use the usual abbreviations DZ. PR., and DZ. U. in this chapter. The chief sources of the above mentioned rights are:

1. Decree of February 8, 1919, relating to Trade Unions DZ. PR. 15/1919.
2. Act of October 27, 1932, concerning Association DZ. U. 94/1932.
3. Constitution of the Polish Republic, March 17, 1921.

mitted lists of nominees from which judges were selected for labor courts, farm-laborers arbitration boards, etc.

#### LABOR CONTRACTS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING<sup>1</sup>

Polish legislation made a distinction between the manual workers and the so-called intellectual workers, in which the intellectual worker was privileged in many respects. The right to a labor contract was established on March 28, 1928, and two decrees were issued, one concerning the manual workers and the second the intellectual workers. A worker could not be fired without two weeks' notice from the last pay day, while in cases of unjust dismissal, a two weeks' indemnity was payable. Besides this, no notice could be given to a manual worker during his vacation or during a period of illness not exceeding four weeks. Intellectual workers, on the other hand, could not be fired without three months' notice, nor could notice be given them during a period of illness not exceeding three months. The decrees included other general rights of the manual and intellectual workers.

The development of the collective bargaining system was a long process in Poland culminating in 1937 with the law of April, 1937, concerning collective agreements. This law was only a formalization of the general practice which had arisen with regard to labor-employer relations in the post-crisis period of the '30's. A wave of strikes, which reached its peak around 1937, spread through the country. This time collective bargaining became an accepted form and the only possible solution of wage disputes. According to the law of 1937, collective agreements could be concluded only by trade unions or federations of trade unions on the one hand, and by employers or their organizations on the other hand. No individual labor contract could violate a collective agreement, and the collective agreement automatically superseded those individual labor contracts which were less favorable to the workers. No item in any collective agreement could be ignored or modified before its date of

---

<sup>1</sup> Main sources:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of March 28, 1928, relating to contracts for the employment of intellectual workers DZ. U. 35/1928. Decree of the President of the Republic of March 28, 1928, relating to contracts for the employment of manual workers, DZ. U.. 35/1928.

2. Act of April 14, 1937, relating to Collective Agreements DZ. U. 31/1937. Seven Orders of the Ministry of Social Welfare of May 31, 1937, on the same subject.

expiration even with the consent of the workers. Collective agreements had to be registered with the Inspector of Labor, and an employer who signed such an agreement had to apply his collective agreement to all workers, union as well as non-union men, to those already employed and those he might employ in the future.

#### EIGHT-HOUR WORK-DAY<sup>1</sup> AND HOLIDAYS<sup>2</sup>

The eight-hour day was promulgated by the first Polish people's government on November 7, 1918, in Lublin. On December 18, 1919, a law was passed in the Polish Sejm providing for a forty-six-hour work week, and thus Poland did not ratify the convention of the International Labor Conference at Washington which resolved on October 29, 1919, to limit the hours of work in industrial enterprises to eight hours a day and forty-eight hours a week. The eight-hour standard applied in Poland to all workers with the exception of agricultural workers. In exceptional cases, such as in catastrophes or national emergencies, in undertakings where work is carried on continuously, or in the case of persons employed as supervisors, the work-day might be lengthened with the consent of the factory inspector, and the maximum of additional hours was fixed in each case. The rate of pay for overtime was time and a half for the first two hours and double time for the next two hours. In 1931, during the period of the great crisis and growing reaction, the law was amended and the working hours were lengthened to forty-eight hours with overtime pay lowered to time and a quarter for the first two hours, and time and a half for the next two. The law also provided a rest of at least one hour in every six hours of work. Other legal regulations shortened the hours

<sup>1</sup> Main sources:

Act of December 18, 1919, relating to hours of work in industry and commerce, consolidated text as promulgated by the Minister of Social Welfare on October 25, 1933, with further amendments DZ. U. 2/1920, DZ. U. 94/1933.

Various orders respecting hours of work—in bakeries (December 10, 1920) in printing shops (August 10, 1932) in hospitals (December 20, 1933) in transport (December 13, 1933), etc.

Act of April 14, 1937, relating to the shortening of hours of work in Coal Mines (DZ. U. 31/1937).

Orders of the Minister of Social Welfare of July 20, 1937, in pursuance of the Act of April 14, 1937. DZ. U. 56/1937.

<sup>2</sup> Main sources: Act of May 22, 1922, concerning holidays with pay for persons employed in industry and commerce (DZ. U. 40/1922).

Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare of June 23, 1923, in pursuance of the Act of May 22, 1922, (DZ. U. 62/1923).

of work of miners working at over eighty-two degrees Fahrenheit to six hours a day and thirty-six hours a week; to miners employed underground and working in other conditions, to seven and one-half hours a day; and for other workers employed in particularly exhausting and unhealthy work to seven hours a day and forty-two hours a week.

Paid holidays were introduced in Poland as early as 1922. A distinction was made here between (a) intellectual workers, (b) young workers, (c) adult workers. The intellectual workers were entitled to one month's vacation yearly with pay. Young workers, that is, workers under 18 years of age, had the right to an uninterrupted, paid vacation of 14 days. The adult manual workers had the right to an eight day paid vacation yearly, and, after three years of continuous employment, the right to sixteen days vacation.

#### EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS, AND WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

The age of employment was fixed by the constitution of March 17, 1921; according to Article 103, the minimum age for the admission of children to commercial industrial undertakings, training and apprenticeship was 15 years. In 1924, Poland also ratified the convention which fixed the minimum age for admission of children to industrial employment at 14 years, and which was adopted by the first session of the International Labor Conference in Washington on October 29, 1919. The work of juveniles was regulated in detail by the Polish law of 1924, according to which a night rest of eleven hours without interruption was obligatory. The time spent at evening school and professional training (limited to six hours weekly) was to be included in the working hours of juveniles, and in order to prevent the exploitation of minors it was forbidden to employ them without wages under the pretext that they were being trained. Juveniles also could not be employed in any branch of industry which is harmful to health.

The same law of July 2, 1924, protects the work of women,

<sup>1</sup> Act of July, 1924, relating to the employment of women and young persons, amended and completed by the Act of November 7, 1931. DZ. U. 65/1924.

Order of the Minister of Social Welfare of October 3, 1935, enumerating the occupations in which young persons might not be employed. DZ. U. 78/1935.

Act of December 18, 1919, concerning hours of work in industry and commerce, consolidated text as promulgated by the Ministry of Social Welfare of October 25, 1933, with further amendments. DZ. U. 2/1920, DZ. U. 94/1933.



who were forbidden to do any underground work in mines, to carry heavy weights or to work as longshoremen. They were also forbidden to work in a large number of unhealthy industries which are listed specifically, such as those using white lead, mercury, or arsenic. The night rest period, at least 11 consecutive hours, must include the hours between 10 P.M. and 5 A.M. In all factories and enterprises employing more than 100 women, there must be a nursery for infants. To expectant mothers the law extends special protection: a woman could leave her job six weeks before her expected confinement and had to be re-employed afterwards if she wished to return; from the beginning of pregnancy, a woman was entitled to work absences of no more than six days a month, in addition to normal holidays; and it was not permitted to employ a woman sooner than six weeks after delivery. For a period of eight weeks she received 50% of her salary, hospitalization and full medical care from social insurance funds. After six months of pregnancy, expectant mothers were taken off certain kinds of work, for example, looking after machines and spinning mills; and the employer was not permitted to fire an expectant mother during her pregnancy or within a few months after the birth of the child. All nursing mothers were also granted two half-hour breaks in the working day to feed their children.

#### INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE AND SAFETY<sup>1</sup>

Extensive legislation protecting the worker against accidents and industries injurious to health was enforced in Poland on June 21, 1924; and Poland ratified the convention concerning the use of white lead in painting adopted by the third session of the International Labor Conference in Geneva on October 25, 1921. The recommendation of the Washington Conference in 1919 requesting the governments to ratify the diplomatic Convention of Berne (1906) forbidding the use of white phosphorus

---

<sup>1</sup> Main sources:

Decree of the President of the Republic concerning safety and industrial hygiene, March 16, 1928 (DZ. U. 35/1928).

Decree of the President of the Republic of August 22, 1927, respecting the prevention of occupational diseases and the fight against these diseases (DZ. U. 78/1927).

Decree of the President of the Republic of June 30, 1927, concerning the manufacture, importation and use of white lead, sulphate of lead and all other lead compounds (DZ. U. 62/1927).

Decree of April 22, 1927, concerning the prohibition of the use of white and yellow phosphorus (DZ. U. 43/1927).

in match factories was applied in Poland, and the use of white and yellow phosphorus in making matches was prohibited in Poland, nor were such matches sold there, since it was also prohibited to import them.

There were special laws concerning ventilation, lighting, heating, and especially industrial safety, but we are unable in this short survey to present all the laws enforced in Poland in connection with health protection.

#### LABOR INSPECTORS, LABOR COURTS, ARBITRATION<sup>1</sup>

The breaking of labor laws was subject to punishment by fines and short prison terms. In most cases fines were imposed. The federal labor inspectors, a corps established in 1927, headed by a chief labor inspector, directly responsible to the Ministry of Labor, were in charge of safeguarding the application of labor laws in factories and in labor relations. Under him, there were divisional labor inspectors who administered larger areas, which in turn were divided into districts, under district labor inspectors. Their task was to insure safety at work and to mediate in certain cases of labor disputes. Special women inspectors supervised the employment of women and young workers in the district, being responsible especially for supervising and enforcing legislation regarding maternity protection and the employment of children and young persons. The inspector acted as public prosecutor when labor laws were broken by the employers.

Disputes involving labor relations and other matters concerning labor were dealt with by special labor courts, composed of a professional judge (a specialist in labor legislation), and four lay judges—two of them representing the trade unions, and two the organizations of the employers, selected by the Minister of Labor from lists submitted by the respective organizations. Before the hearing the lay judges would attempt to formulate an agreement which both parties would accept out of court.

Special arbitration courts were set up to deal with disputes

<sup>1</sup> Main sources:

Decree of the President of the Republic of July 14, 1927, concerning factory inspection (DZ. U. 67/1927).

Decree of the President of the Republic of October 24, 1934, concerning labor courts (DZ. U. 95/1934).

Act of August 1, 1919, concerning the settlement of disputes between employers and workers in agriculture (DZ. U. 90/1931).

between employers and agricultural laborers, the arbitration board being composed of representatives of laborers' trade unions and employers. Both parties elected the chairman, and if they were unable to agree on a chairman, the inspector of labor presided. But all matters of this kind were primarily dealt with by the labor inspector who would try to bring about a voluntary agreement out of court. The labor courts worked faster and more efficiently than regular courts, and labor claims took precedence over all others. The execution of labor claims proceeded with exceptional speed.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY IN POLAND<sup>1</sup>

Polish labor legislation developed through the years a kind of social security system. Although it was constituted by several separate laws, it granted, to a greater or lesser extent, protection against sickness, accident, unemployment, old age. Compulsory health and maternity insurance for workers was introduced in Poland as early as May 19, 1920, but even before the promulgation of this law, health insurance was enforced in some parts of Polish territory, especially in the old Austrian part of Poland, where the Polish Socialists and trade unions developed the first social insurance organization. In 1933, a new social insurance act of March 28 was introduced which changed the old one in some respects, adding old age pensions and lessening certain privileges. Thus, the number of people covered by the law was further restricted and the agricultural workers were no longer included at all but were granted special medical assistance, and, if necessary, hospitalization at the employer's expense. Under the law of 1933, all manual and non-manual workers, with the exception of the agricultural workers, were subject to insurance if their wages did not exceed 725 zlotys (around \$140) a month, which was in Poland an executive's salary. Civil servants, or local government employees, were not embraced by this insurance because they were subject to special

<sup>1</sup> Main sources:

Social Insurance Act of March 28, 1933, amended by further enactments (DZ. U. 51/1933).

Decree of the President of the Republic of November 24, 1927, concerning the insurance of intellectual workers, amended by subsequent enactments (DZ. U. 106/1927).

Act of July 18, 1924, relating to Unemployment Insurance for Manual Workers, amended by further enactments (DZ. U. 67/1924).

Law of April 11, 1924, concerning protection of tenants (DZ. U. 39/1924; 105/1931; 82/1931).

health insurance regulations. Insured persons were entitled to medical benefits, from the first day of sickness for a period not exceeding 26 weeks, consisting of medical treatment by a physician, basic drugs, and prescribed medical and surgical care, as well as hospitalization. The dependents of the insured person—that is, the husband or wife, children under 16, and under certain conditions up to 21 or 24 years of age, and in some cases the parents, brothers or sisters of the insured—were entitled to the same benefits. A person who had paid premiums for not less than 26 weeks during the preceding year was also entitled, in case of sickness, to cash benefits payable for not more than 26 weeks, amounting to 50% of the wages received before the inception of the illness.

Insured women and wives of insured men were entitled to medical treatment including full pre-natal care and care during confinement. Insured women were also entitled to 50% of their last wage for a period of 8 weeks within the period of pregnancy or confinement.

Half of the monthly fee for social insurance was paid by the insured person and half by the employer.

Poland also had compulsory accident insurance from the beginning of its national existence. The law concerning compulsory accident insurance was amended and included in the general social insurance act of March 28, 1933. Besides this Poland ratified on November 7, 1937, the convention of the International Labor Conference in Geneva of May 19, 1925, concerning industrial accidents. Under Polish law a manual as well as an intellectual worker disabled by an industrial accident during his working hours or on the way to his working place was entitled to a pension, when his earning capacity was reduced at least 10% because of the accident. The amount of the pension differed according to the percentage of disability. In case of total disability, the pension amounted to 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the average wage, and when permanent medical attention was required an additional 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % was granted. An injured worker was entitled to medical treatment and all kinds of care. In cases of fatality the dependents were entitled to pensions. The accident insurance fees were paid only by the employers and the rates varied according to the amount of risk.

There were special courts dealing with questions of pensions for sickness and accident, composed of laymen appointed under the chairmanship of a professional judge—a specialist in insur-

ance cases. In these courts the workers were represented in the laymen group, and, like the labor courts, these bodies worked quickly and efficiently.

As far as unemployment insurance was concerned, here again there was a distinction between manual workers and intellectual workers. The privileges of the intellectual workers were much greater than those of the manual workers, and they had a quite different type of insurance organization, all paid intellectual workers in Poland being insured under special insurance schemes. Unemployment benefits were paid to those intellectual workers who had lost their employment provided they had paid premiums for at least twelve months during the preceding two years. The benefit was paid over a period of six to nine months and amounted to from 23 to 35% of the average salary of the last year's employment, while in addition a family allowance was paid of 10% for each dependent member of the family.

The insurance scheme for manual workers applied to those working in businesses in which not less than five people were employed. This did not cover domestic and agricultural workers. Benefits were paid up to a period of thirteen weeks to unemployed who had paid premiums for at least twenty-six weeks during the preceding year, amounting to 30% of the average weekly wage of the preceding thirteen weeks, with a family supplement of 5 to 20%. Allowances for children were paid only if the insured person had lost his employment through no fault of his own, and was willing and able to accept other employment.

The unemployed person in Poland was protected in another vital respect, namely, in regard to his shelter. A special law protected the tenant in so-called old houses in various ways.<sup>1</sup>

The workers inhabited mainly these old houses. In the case of unemployment, or in cases where hardship connected with unemployment could be proved, a rent moratorium was granted to the unemployed tenant and he could not be evicted as long as he remained unemployed.

In 1933, general insurance against old age and disability was introduced in Poland by the social insurance law. As has been pointed out, this act reduced certain earlier health insurance benefits, but it instituted small old-age pensions for working

---

<sup>1</sup> All houses built before 1914, 1917 or 1918, depending upon the province.

people. According to this law, an insured person who became incapable of work, irrespective of the cause of his disability, or when he reached the age of 65 and had contributed to the fund for at least 60 months, was entitled to disability or old-age pension. For manual workers, this period was 200 weeks in the preceding ten years. The scheme provided that the age limit of 65 might be reduced in certain cases to 60 and for women to 55.<sup>1</sup>

Special much older legislation concerned the old age and disability insurance of intellectual workers who were provided for by a special fund and received higher pensions and even greater privileges.

---

<sup>1</sup> This insurance did not apply in cases of accident and occupational disease, which were covered by other laws.



*Part Three*

THE POLISH WORKER WRITES  
ABOUT HIMSELF





---

## Social Memoirs in Poland

---

It is extremely difficult to describe the life of the working class in Poland, for an exact description would have to be limited to a strictly defined locality, to one factory or one mine. But such a description would not give the reader a correct idea of the extremely varied life of the Polish working class; and it would give no idea of the aspirations of the Polish workers.

But there is another method of painting the picture. The biographies of workers from various milieus can give us a general and vivid although not always an exact idea. Such accounts may be less detailed and perhaps less profound than scientific surveys, but, nevertheless, collections of such descriptions and memoirs give us a broad picture of the whole class, rather than a detailed picture of one particular milieu. Hence the great value of these memoirs and biographies, which are nowhere a richer source of information than in Poland.

By social memoirs we mean biographical descriptions, notes, or letters written by representatives of a given social group, the chief purpose of which is to depict their milieu as typical (one might also say stereotyped) and to give us samples of a particular type of social group. Memoirs of peasants, workers, emigrants and physicians constitute such social memoirs. In America a classical example is Booker T. Washington's "Up from Slavery."

This type of description in Polish and American sociological literature was scientifically utilized by William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in their study: "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America," published in 1927. The authors collected in two volumes, considered a classic in their field, a number of letters written from Poland to emigrants in the States and letters written by the latter to their brothers, sisters, parents and friends in Poland. These letters depict the milieu of the Polish peasants, the lot of the Polish peasants, the struggle for

existence of the Polish emigrant in America, the lot of the Polish peasant in the Russian army in Siberia, etc. We find in them a cross section of the Polish popular milieu, especially of the peasant and emigrant milieu at the beginning of this century.

After 1918, sociology became popular in Poland, and memoir-writing in all forms, individual and collective, won an important place in literature. From among the individual memoirs, one of the earliest deserving of mention was Jan Slomka's, published in Cracow in 1912 and translated into English under the title "From Serfdom to Self-Government" (London, 1941). The author, who was bailiff of Dzikow, a Galician village, was born in 1842, and he describes serfdom just as Booker T. Washington describes slavery in the southern states. Slomka lived to see an independent Poland, for he lived till 1927. Thus he was able to give a picture of the village milieu as it developed in the course of several decades. In 1930, the Sociological Institute of Poznan published the memoirs of Jakob Wojciechowski, a worker. (Edited by Jozef Chalasiński.) The memoirs of a thief, Urke Nachalnik, were a literary sensation, and although unreliable in parts, they give an interesting picture of a small town Jewish milieu.

A broader picture can be found in the collective memoirs which are so characteristic of Polish descriptive sociology. The work of Thomas and Znaniecki, although it was based on Polish material and exerted a certain influence on subsequent investigations, was carried out on American soil and utilized chiefly letters, not memoirs. The Institute of Social Economy in Warsaw initiated a series of investigations of various social milieus through collective memoirs by holding a contest for the best memoirs of an unemployed man. As a result, the Institute collected considerable material and published fifty-seven memoirs in a volume entitled, "Memoirs of the Unemployed" (Warsaw, 1933).

This publication was a real event not only scientifically, but in the literary world. It fully revealed the splendid talent that lay dormant in the working class masses and expressed the artistic and philosophical values of the educated and thinking Polish worker. It revealed the tragedy of waste that is unemployment, waste of the most valuable possession of mankind—magnificent human material, magnificent in character, sensibilities and education. This picture of everyday reality of the life of the un-

employed was so striking that Polish public opinion was stirred. Daily newspapers of all shades constantly returned to this valuable publication. Its fundamental value is all the greater because it was a pioneer work in its field.

The "Memoirs of the Unemployed" dispelled many legends and false hypotheses. They showed that the unemployed man is not idle, that on the contrary his whole day is taken up with the exhausting search for work, standing in line for the dole, etc. They also showed that unemployment had given rise to much reflection in many of the unemployed, that their spiritual life had become tragic and deep.

The "Memoirs of the Unemployed" were indisputably a turning point in the development of spontaneous working-class literature, as well as in the studies of working-class milieus. Two mighty volumes of "Peasants' Memoirs," published by the same Institute in 1935, were the next step in the development of this method. These memoirs gave the same unexpected picture—unexpected, that is, for the desk intellectuals—of the maturity of the Polish peasant. The peasants wrote with their characteristic simplicity and sincerity about their experiences and did not try in the least to soften their sharp criticism of the government. They wrote of their families, and communities, of the soil and their age-old peasant misery. The "Peasants' Memoirs" revealed several new aspects of peasant life, threw into sharp relief the cultural and economic characteristics of the western Polish provinces and the process of emancipation taking place in the Polish peasant class. The material they offer is some thirty years more recent than the letters used by Thomas and Znaniecki. The difference in the level of development and the opinions expressed in these two sets of documents is striking. A comparison of the two collections shows that during those thirty years fundamental changes took place in the villages, above all that considerable intellectual progress was made. The range of interests of the peasants of independent Poland was broad, their approach to problems bold and profound. Despite difficult living conditions and intense political struggles, the younger peasant generation moved forward with extraordinary rapidity. The cultural progress of the Polish village, not in the technical but in the spiritual sense, was so considerable during the period of independence that it manifested itself even in the use of the national language; the so-called "peasant dialect," which in many Polish provinces was different from the so-called

literary language, unfortunately had a tendency to disappear as a result of cultural adjustment. I myself during my youth witnessed the gradual dying out of the language of the villages in the Cracow region, which everyone remembered from his childhood. I do not speak here of the distinct and crystallized dialect such as those of the Gorale or Kaszubs, but the so-called "peasant language" as opposed to the language of the cities, that of the educated classes, the comparatively colorless language of the government and the post office, which pretentious city-dwellers call the "literary" language.

Prominent among peasant memoirs is the great four-volume work prepared and published by the Institute of Village Culture in Warsaw and edited by Jozef Chalasinski. Under the title "The Young Generation of Peasants" (Warsaw, 1939) it assembled extraordinarily valuable memoirs of young peasants who describe the village environment, the work of peasant youth, clubs, and the social, administrative and economic problems in the villages.

The peasant memoirs also throw much light on working class problems, and these are not only the problems of the agricultural worker. The Polish industrial worker was in most instances closely connected with the village of his birth or origin. Many workers born in cities had family ties in the village and many others lived in the country and cultivated a plot of ground during their free time.

Workers' memoirs were collected by Zygmunt Myslowski and myself in the volume entitled "Workers Write" (Cracow-Warsaw, 1938). The authors, with the co-operation of the Society of the Workers' University (TUR), the largest Polish workers' educational organization, held a contest for the best workers' memoirs. They attempted to steer the interests of the participants toward certain concrete social and cultural problems. Questionnaires prepared by the directors contained among other things questions concerning the workers' childhood, self-education, reading habits, interest in workers' organizations, etc. Thus valuable scientific material was collected which illustrated the cultural aspirations of the workers. These memoirs also threw a great deal of light on the workers' families, their organizational life and educational systems and revealed the real social tendencies within the working class.

Social memoirs found a relatively large circle of readers in Poland. They reached the public through the newspapers which

always gave them much publicity, and their success encouraged institutions representing various interests and social classes to continue this type of work. After the contest for workers' memoirs, a contest was organized by the Social Insurance Foundation for memoirs of physicians. It appealed chiefly to social insurance physicians, that is to say, doctors who were active among industrial workers or among the half-industrialized and half-agricultural working-class population. Once again, the "Physicians' Memoirs" published in Warsaw in 1939 were a literary and scientific event, thanks to the truthful picture they gave. In these memoirs the doctors chiefly depicted the social aspects of their patients' condition, the difficulties encountered in treating them, difficulties resulting from their social position. Many stressed the fatal influence on the health of the Polish village, of the change in the insurance statute that was adopted in 1933, abolishing compulsory health insurance for agricultural workers. They revealed how great was the role of social insurance in the struggle for the health of the population, and how much more effort was needed to raise the general health condition in Poland to a proper level. Most important of all, these memoirs revealed the good and bad points of the Polish health policy and could be a valuable guide in planning proper measures of prevention and care.

The last publication of the type under discussion here in Poland was the "Memoirs of Emigrants"; these were edited by the above-mentioned Institute of Social Economy that did so much excellent work in the field of social studies. Unfortunately, this publication was not completed, having been interrupted by the war. Only two volumes were published, "France" (Warsaw, 1939), and "South America" (Warsaw, 1939). Polish emigration to France increased appreciably after World War I, replacing the former open emigration to the United States, which after 1918 ceased to play any real role. The Polish workers in France were for the most part employed in the northern mining regions, in heavy labor such as mining, and to a very great extent in agricultural labor. In France they kept their own old traditions; they also brought a Polish type of organization, and trade union traditions which were successfully integrated with the French system of trade unions. The volume devoted to France depicts the life of the Polish workers in that country, and the authors write openly and sincerely of the cause of their emigration, their bitter misery in Poland; they praise French

liberalism and democratic customs, the higher standard of living, the higher earnings. But they do not refrain from sharply criticizing their exploitation by French capitalists, or even from denouncing other Polish workers who because of their long stay in Germany, in the Westphalian mines, became too deeply imbued with German habits. Throughout all these memoirs there runs an expression of strong attachment to their mother country. The Polish workers did not spare money and effort to maintain their spiritual ties with their own country and culture through correspondence, newspapers, books, schools and social organizations.

In South America the Polish emigrants are chiefly farmers. They are most numerous in Brazil; the majority are peasants who left Poland in order to settle once more on the soil, a pioneering element who penetrate undaunted into the virgin forests. The perseverance of these frontiersmen who push into the depths of an unknown country without sufficient preparation and equipment, and usually without sufficient protection, is amazing. The exploits of these pioneers are recorded in the second volume of the emigrants' memoirs, some of them written by very old pioneers. In one of them, the reminiscence of a popular meeting in Malopolska and the speeches of the Polish working-class and socialist leader, Ignacy Daszynski, are mingled with descriptions of the Brazilian wilderness and the exploits and labors of the pioneers in the tropics. The South American memoirs are a great collection of social documents on the processes of human adjustment to entirely new natural and social milieus.

The Jewish Scientific Institute in Wilno (IWO) gathered together a great collection of social memoirs written by young Jewish people—there are about 600 of them, perhaps more. Unfortunately, the organizers of this particular contest and the Institute itself did not publish the original memoirs. The immense archives of the IWO served as a psychological and social laboratory, and at most only fragments of them were published as illustrations in certain detailed monographs.<sup>1</sup>

When in Wilno in 1940 I had an opportunity to study more than a hundred of these memoirs. Many of them are very valuable. Some contain interesting descriptions of the Jewish working class milieu in Poland, or studies of specific problems of the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Max Weinreich published a work in Yiddish entitled, "The Way to Our Youth" (Wilno, 1935), based on such memoirs.

Jewish population. I found, for instance, interesting material on the process of adjustment of old customs and traditions to the requirements of modern industry.

After the occupation of Wilno the Germans transported the collections of the Jewish Institute to Cracow, and it is quite possible that they destroyed them, just as they destroyed one of the most complete collections of Jewish books in the world, the Straszun Library in Wilno. This makes it all the more regrettable that the directors of the Institute never published the original memoirs.



---

## Texts

---

### THE INTERPRETATION OF WORKERS' MEMOIRS

The workers' memoirs, while they immediately reflect social reality, do this in a more or less one-sided manner, since few workers have a talent for writing, or are able to compose a work of several dozen pages, describe facts, and draw conclusions. The authors of memoirs are especially gifted workers, and thus these memoirs inevitably have a limited character, covering, moreover, only certain social milieus. The writers describe facts in a subjective manner, writing chiefly of what strikes them most forcibly, what makes them suffer most, often purely individual factors, because these, as well as social factors, play a very great part in people's lives. Like nearly everyone, they consider most of the facts of their gray everyday lives uninteresting, often regarding the history of an ordinary day's work as known to everybody, and hence unworthy of being described. In contrast, events outside the everyday framework, in other words, extraordinary events, deserve to be described. There are exceptions, of course, and in many memoirs we find artistic and vivid descriptions of this everyday life.

I shall not try to enumerate all the deficiencies of the social memoirs, and shall mention only one more. A description made by a professional sociologist is perhaps more thorough, often analyzing the entire functioning of a given institution, the totality of the social processes encountered in a given group. Descriptions by keen observers, that often pass into history, for instance those of talented journalists, usually concern the most vital subjects, and amateur writers of memoirs describe what they consider most essential. Often, and perhaps even very often, these are really the most important things, many times they also happen to include the totality of a given institution or social process. Nevertheless, such descriptions often have a fragmentary character and touch upon mere superficial matters,

but even then they are interesting, because they show what a representative of a given social stratum regards as essential.

Despite all these deficiencies, the workers' or peasants' memoirs give a description of social reality that is close to the truth, because it is made by people who have experienced this reality and who understand it. It is not for them a soulless object of observation but an object of passion, suffering and happiness. And this fact fully compensates for all the deficiencies. However, these deficiencies must be kept in mind, and the reader must accept their writers' opinions and conclusions with certain reservations.

#### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

The memoirs are written by workers and peasants born for the most part at the turn of the century, when Poland was partitioned among Russia, Austria and Germany. In the part occupied by Russia there were no Polish schools; in the part occupied by Germany, Polish schools were persecuted; while freedom of teaching in Polish existed only in the part occupied by Austria. In the memoirs we encounter lively expressions of the longing for schools and we read about the obstacles in the way of the children's aspirations to continue their education. The Russian administration made no effort to enable the children to attend school, which was favored only in so far as they furthered the process of Russification. Moreover, the people of that time were not sufficiently enlightened to realize the importance of education for their children. Most of the parents of our writers were peasants born in the 1860's and 1870's during the period of the abolition of serfdom in the part of Poland occupied by Russia; they were often illiterates, remaining under the strong influence of the clergy and clinging to old cultural traditions. It is true, however, that more advanced parents devoted all their energy to giving an education to their children. The latter trend could be observed particularly in certain categories of skilled workers such as railroadmen and printers, whose more stable jobs and higher incomes enabled them to send their children to school. Through their contacts with educated engineers and administrators, these workers realized more readily than others that social progress in Western Europe was connected with education. But the nineteenth-century peasants generally lacked means, and were compelled to send

their children to work, or, if they owned a larger farm, to use them as labor power. Thus, the peasant children were left without schooling, and in our memoirs we must often admire the energy of the young peasant generation that overcame all these obstacles.

A large percentage of Polish workers were recruited in the villages, hence the frequent descriptions of childhood in the countryside. The life of a village child was very hard. From his earliest years he worked on a farm, and especially before 1914 was often sent to work in strangers' houses at the age of ten. Education and economic conditions are interdependent, and to attend school in winter one needs shoes; to have shoes and food one must earn them; and to earn money one must work in a factory or as a servant. But when one works from dawn to dusk, it is difficult to attend school. Such was the dilemma of a ten-year-old child yearning for education. In Memoir No. 21 from the "Memoirs of Peasants" we find a picture of just such a sad childhood of a laborer, partly urban, partly rural, from the Miechow district in Kielce province.

"Memoirs of Peasants." No. 21 <sup>1</sup>

"When I began my sixth year of life I was told to graze cows and so I remained a cowherd until the age of ten. By the end of my ninth year my father sent me to work for a farmer, tending cows and doing various jobs on the farm. This farmer did not realize that he had hired a child; he thought he had hired a farm laborer. He did not realize that I needed protection, and education, and demanded of me the most exacting work, impossible for such a young child. My relatives advised me to quit this job. . . . So I went into a textile factory . . . where I worked for two years, and from this factory I went to school. There were several other grown-up and younger boys in this factory, they were sons of farmers and almost all of them knew how to read and write. I begged my parents to send me to school, perhaps I could learn something, perhaps I could help myself that way.

"But father was unwilling, for, although my earnings were miserable, barely 10 to 12 kopeks a day, yet they amounted to something every month, and if I went to school it would cost money. So I begged my mother to give me a few kopeks to buy

<sup>1</sup> "Memoirs of Peasants" (in Polish). Institute of Social Economy. Warsaw, 1935, pp. 283-285.

something for the teacher, so that he would admit me to school; I got 20 kopeks, and bought a pound of sugar and five rolls. The teacher was a kind and noble man, he not only paid attention to the gift, but to my request. He admitted me to school, bought two books for me, one Polish and one Russian, then gave me back my money and I attended classes. I was an average child, at home no one knew how to read, and outside my family there were few others of my acquaintance who knew how to read. I lived on a little farm two kilometers from the village, there was no one with whom to go over my work except at school, but at school I was busy answering questions and learning the new lesson. This was difficult, learning all these things by my own efforts, and worst of all, my shoes got torn, and I had no money to buy new ones. I had to work at the manor to earn money for them. I got along until the middle of February and this was the end of my first school year. The following fall I did the same thing as the year before. The teacher admitted me and again I went to school until March; then my shoes got torn and that was the end of school, and again I went to work. I learned as much as I could, I had barely learned the letters and a little bit about addition and how to write the numbers up to one hundred, that was all. I returned to work at the manor, and worked in the winter for 10 kopeks a day, and in the summer for twenty kopeks, from dawn to dusk. Father did not think of sending me to any institute or school, he sent all of our children to work at the manor, for he was a faithful servant of the lord, and listened to the advice of the priest. The priest always preached from the pulpit, 'work and pray, and you will be saved.' So father followed this principle and hammered it into his children, for misery does not ask you whether to go to the lord or the priest but falls upon the worker and mercilessly strangles him. Thus father drove each of his children to work as soon as he got some strength. So I, too, at the age of twelve had to go to work at the manor, there was no choice, young or old you had to toil from sunrise to sunset. And often even after sunset when I returned from work, I had to help mother because she had more work than she could do. . . . In winter the days were shorter, although the frost got into the marrow of your bones, for our shoes were lousy and often full of holes, and our clothes were wretched because the workers were too poor to buy good merchandise, they could not afford it. . . . Hunger did not annoy you so much in the winter for although there was not bread, we

had potatoes, and there was always plenty of water at home, although the food was often not salted enough. It was fat, although without gravy, but a worker will eat anything. Worst of all for the workers was the spring, because the day was long, and sometimes you were almost out of breath by evening. When you came home, supper was not ready for mother was still in the fields sowing potatoes or in the woods cutting trees. Our hut was padlocked, but our windows often had no panes, so I would get in through a window, and rather than look for some food, would throw myself down somewhere to catch my breath and would fall asleep like a log so that I could not be awakened. . . . By morning they would wake me, and I would think it was for supper, but it was for work. At least mother gave me some potatoes for a bite before breakfast so I would not feel too weak, and so hunger was driven away. For months there was no bread. . . ."

The foregoing fragment of memoirs describes the conditions under Russian occupation, but the lot of a poor village child under German or Austrian occupation was not very different. The following excerpt from the memoirs of a Carpathian mountaineer, later a miner, proves this point:

From "Workers Write," No. 75. Jozef Sepek, agricultural laborer, later a miner, finally an intellectual worker <sup>1</sup>

" . . . It was difficult to subsist on a little plot of ground. I had to work. Father was a wanderer, so to speak. From his early years he had traveled around looking for work (usually to Prussia) where he took all sorts of jobs, on farms or in factories. After having married my mother, he went to work in Germany and remained there for whole years, visiting his home only during the important holidays. At first he sent money home, but with time he forgot his wife and children, leaving them to the mercy of fate.

"My first memories reach back to the age of five. My mother sent me to the elementary school. In my free time I helped her. My favorite activity was tending the cow, our sole bread-giver; when I was older (eight to nine) I worked with mother in the field, helping to plant and dig potatoes and pick other vegetables.

<sup>1</sup> Zygmunt Mysłakowski, Feliks Gross: "Workers Write" (in Polish), Warsaw-Cracow, 1938, p. 323.

"I usually was hungry at school, but I studied quite hard. Only from time to time when mother had a few pennies did she give me some to buy myself some bread during recess, and naturally I ate just dry bread on those occasions. My schoolmistress, of whom I usually asked permission to buy bread in the store which was a fair distance from the school, asked me why my mother did not give me breakfast before I went to school, and I usually answered with tears running down my face that my mother had no time to prepare breakfast. However I was glad to have a piece of bread, because more often than not I had none. Sometimes my mouth watered when I saw my schoolmates eat bread with butter. My poor mother had to earn our daily subsistence. It was a great celebration at home when we had bread, we bought it mostly for Sundays or holidays, apart from it our only food was potatoes or cabbage. We had the same thing for breakfast, dinner and supper. Very often we had no dinner at all. What milk we had from our only cow, mother had to sell in the town to get various necessities like salt, matches, etc. All the burden thus rested upon her, and it often surpassed her strength. To feed her children she often had to work for our neighbors in addition to her work at home, and labor in the sweat of her brow on the fields. Mother herself did not eat, but brought everything she got to us. If, for instance, she got an afternoon meal at her work, she always brought bread to us at home, or some delicacies from dinner. She was very hard-working, but lacked business sense, so that much of her toil had no results.

"What my mother went through is indescribable. I would be accused of letting my imagination run wild if I said any more about it, and my aim is to render reality honestly without any embroidery. How many nights she did not sleep for worrying about us, about what she would feed us with and clothe us with, how many tears she shed, it seemed that she would weep her eyes away! Mother suffered everything, yet emerged triumphant. Today I admire her powers of resistance, the fact that she did not break under this weight of misfortune, today I am happy when I think of her. My mother was a heroine, a martyr of fate. Her face, furrowed with wrinkles, is like a mirror of her labors, which made her body insensitive, but hardened her spirit in the forge of life. She was and will remain an example to us. I do not bow before any images or statues, I do it only before my mother. Only a filial heart knows how to appreciate her labors and sacrifice."

The following is from the memoirs of the son of a small peasant who did all he could to give his children a good education despite his poverty.

"Memories of Emigrants." No. 30. Agricultural laborer, later miner, finally mason, son of a small peasant from Kielce province, born in 1907<sup>1</sup>

"... I wanted to continue my studies, so my father racked his brains over how to get a little money to enable him to send me to school. Alas he could do nothing. He suffered, seeing my wish to study and my gifts, but he could not think of a way. The expenses of the school were beyond his capacity. What is even worse, when it became more difficult to feed us all, he sent me to work tending cows for a farmer. I was fifteen years old, but how difficult it was for me to leave my family. I wept, but I did not ask my father to let me stay, for I well understood the necessity of my exile. Yet I did not like to be with strangers, so despite my father's prohibition I ran away after three weeks and returned home. My father did not say anything, but I saw that he was glad of my return although he tried not to show it. He loved us all and we all loved him in return, but while we tried to show him our love, he tried to conceal his at the bottom of his heart. He always made an effort to be severe with us, he punished the slightest transgressions, but he suffered when he was forced to punish any of us. He loved me best of all because I did my best and never needed to be punished."

Jakub Bajurski, the author of the following excerpt, was a worker from Warsaw. In the course of his life he often changed his occupation, like many of his comrades. He, too, spent his youth under Russian occupation. (From "Workers Write," No. 5, *op. cit.*, p. 213.)

"... My parents occupied a small and very modest apartment on the ground floor. It was always uncomfortable for our large family because of its small size. I remember that we slept four in one bed, two at the head and two at the foot. The apartment was cold, because my father always rented places in old houses to save on rent. His earnings were modest, and the subsistence of the whole family was pitiful. Even today there are not enough schools, and at that time, when my parents might

<sup>1</sup> "Memoirs of Emigrants," France (in Polish). Institute of Social Economy. Warsaw, 1939, p. 446.

have been helped by a school, there were even fewer of them. My parents were uneducated, only mother could read printed matter, so she profited from books.

"Mother taught us to read when we were very young. I remember that she would give us a few verses to memorize before breakfast, and would tell us that we would not get any breakfast if we did not learn them, and since mother was wont to keep her word, we often had to go without breakfast or dinner, but when at last there was an opportunity to send me to school, it was easy for me to study, because I knew a little already and I quickly passed from class to class. . . ."

Misery breaks through almost every page of these memoirs of youth. The reader might justly ask whether all the workers, even the skilled ones, lived in such difficult conditions. Naturally this was not so. The memoirs we have quoted are characteristic of the largest mass of the workers who suffered from real poverty and unemployment. They were recruited from the surplus village population, and from the urban army of reserve, composed of peasants with small holdings or none at all who could not be supported by the village. The divergence between the highest and lowest income groups of the working class was great; and our memoirs were written chiefly by the members of the lowest group. We have noted before that most of these workers were born before the First World War.

#### HUNGER AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployed became a social class in themselves, and lived beyond the pale of the working class and normal society. A monument to the sufferings of the unemployed of the whole world was published by the Warsaw Institute of Social Economy under the title "*Memoirs of Unemployed*"—a really tragic work, which is written with great native literary talent. Once again one is struck by the lack of memoirs written by well-off workers, and the predominance of memoirs by people who suffered from hunger and lack of employment. The fact that highly skilled and highly paid employed workers do not write is not accidental. As a rule, a suffering man thinks more than a happy man, he ponders over his own and his family's misfortunes, and over the ways of alleviating these sufferings, although he often does not realize this fact. During the period of romanticism, poets craved suffering and envied Werther his pangs



for these reasons. Unemployment is a great social suffering; a hungry man's ideas of the world are completely different from a full man's. This is the subject of the following excerpt from the memoirs of Bajurski whom we have quoted above. ("Workers Write," *op. cit.*, pp. 217 sqq.)

"Hunger is terrible and has a profound influence upon people. A hungry man is incapable of any struggle and finds it hard even to control himself. A starving life is no life, it is a perpetual torment. A hungry man is indignant at everything. . . . I well remember that when I was hungry I was utterly exhausted and had all sorts of wild ideas centering around revenge against injustice. I saw more errors in the ways of the world than when I was well-fed. One feels a great disgust with life and with knowledge, one's mind is dulled, for all one's intellectual efforts are directed toward filling one's stomach, one lies in wait for a prey like a wild beast. A man can be entirely like a wolf. It is well known that a hungry wolf will attack a man, but a sated one will avoid him and even flee from him. If the courts based their sentences for the theft of food on the practice of hungry criminals, they would impose very low fines, or even acquit the accused. And if judges ever suffered hunger they would have a different idea of crime.

"A hungry man is unable to learn anything, he does not think of learning and that is why it is right for schools to try to feed the children, this is a service that deserves praise. Unemployment and hunger go together, they are one enemy. . . . I shall briefly recall my own experiences with this enemy. . . .

"I walked around as though lifeless, I was not interested in anything that was happening around me, people jostled me, but I barely noticed them. My head hung down as though I were collecting little stones, speech was alien to me, it seemed to me that my head was growing larger from thoughts of prey. My clothing was too thin, because I had sold all my warm clothes. My body gave little warmth, because it was emaciated. A man has little shame then, and often does not care to cover his body. People avoid you, and refuse to give you anything, saying that you are lazy, that you could find work but that you do not want it. And when you ask for work you are told that you can find it elsewhere, but it is useless to go. . . . If you want to have good citizens, give people work, if you want to have thieves and all kinds of useless elements, throw men out of work."

Bajurski thought a great deal and drew far-reaching conclusions, although it seemed to him that hunger killed all his capacity to think.

In addition to suffering from hunger, the unemployed suffers from his social degradation. Skilled workers, proud of their skill, are often forced to take inferior jobs. Narrow-minded people, and they are in the majority, look upon him as a beggar. He is so humiliated by having to receive relief or help from his friends, that he often pretends that he does not need it. This inner struggle against hunger and against spiritual collapse often assumes heroic proportions. The worker, crushed by his physical and spiritual suffering, looks for a solution. Suicide or crime is the simplest way out; but often the workers think of changing the social order or taking revenge upon society for their sufferings. We are told of this by the author of *Memoir No. 313*, a worker who did odd jobs and lived in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup>

"Ah how I suffer from my helplessness; I cannot find any job at all which would enable me at least to eat something, so that mother would not have to worry about what she will light the stove with tomorrow and buy bread with. . . .

"In the morning I drank a glass of coffee and ate a piece of bread. Then I went out into the streets, although it was Sunday, and walked and looked—for what, I don't know. To eat. Yes, I wanted to eat. The streets were full of people, dressed neatly, the women wore beautiful furs, it was a holiday, there were crowds in front of the churches. My arms hung down strangely, they were a burden to me, I moved my legs as if unconsciously, without strength. I was pushed on by the passers-by, I had no strength to walk more firmly, I had no strength to resist. People went into a bar. In the windows there were dinner menus. There was a smell of food. I dragged myself home. Mother still had a few potatoes for dinner, surely she would have cooked them. Only I did not know whether she still had coal. Perhaps there would be enough for today. I had potatoes for dinner, and for supper too. For a long time I could not fall asleep, my stomach was burning from the dry potatoes. Thoughts began to stream through my mind, thoughts of all kinds, one stranger and more frightening than the other. How good it would be to

<sup>1</sup> The fragments quoted in this section are from the collection published under the title "*Memoirs of Unemployed*" (in Polish), published by the Institute of Social Economy in Warsaw, pp. 54, 56, 59.

die, to sleep! Dreams! I have money. . . . I will be able to fill myself with food. I will pay my rent. The house collapses, chokes me. . . . My stomach was burning, my mouth was aflame. I did not sleep. Mother did not sleep either, she was hungry, she had eaten even less than I. She pretended that she was sleeping and I pretended, too. I wished I could fall asleep and stay asleep. I woke up. It was day. My head was ice cold, I crawled under the blanket to get warm, my insides were twisted with hunger, my stomach ached. What would today bring? I went out. . . . It was cold and gloomy in the apartment, not a piece of bread, nothing to light the stove with. How could I stay at home? . . . It was more cheerful in the streets. When I could watch those who had something, I myself felt less poor. Then I went to see an acquaintance, an unscrupulous man, but he earns a living, if you can call it earning a living to cheat one's fellow-men. He makes fun of all those who condemn him for it. I came there at dinner time, and they asked me to share their meal. They did it as though they were doing me an extraordinary favor. I thanked them and said that I had to be home for dinner in half an hour. I lied, of course. I sat down and scanned the newspaper. I did not see anything. I was aware of the smell of soup, of braised veal and apple compote. I pretended I was absorbed in my newspaper and stealthily swallowed the water in my mouth. I would not go out. I would sit, let them not think that I was hungry. A mist covered my eyes. I got up. I felt wretched. . . .

" . . . I waited for the New Year, perhaps it would bring me more luck. . . . I was thirty-two years old, and if at that age I must suffer from joblessness and hunger, what would happen to me later?

"I went out into the street at nightfall. Excessive traffic, trolley cars packed full, a swarm of taxicabs, crowded sidewalks. People pushing each other, everyone in a hurry, it was New Year's Eve. Crowds thronged around the theaters, there was a jam of taxicabs before the Grand Opera as the public came en masse to the ball. Taxies came one after another to the entrances of restaurants, elegantly dressed men and ladies in magnificent gowns got out of them. All of them were in a hurry not to be late, as though the world was to end tomorrow. Plenty of passers-by in the streets, all gay, laughing, many drunk. At Nowy Swiat (Warsaw's main thoroughfare) in a recess in the wall there stood a beggar in rags. 'Help a starving man, ladies and gentle-

men, don't refuse, I am hungry!' Some charitable hand threw a coin into his cap. Yes, he was hungry, he begged and he got something. He received mostly copper coins, but sometimes a nickel coin also gleamed in the pile. I stood for a while and observed this beggar. Oh, how hungry I was. For dinner I had had potato soup, now it was long after midnight, and I had not eaten for hours. I was strangely hunched up, for hunger breaks and humiliates a man, it forces him to do anything, to heroism or crime. I straightened out, chest forward, head up. Let no one know that I was hungry, let some appearance be preserved, after all I could not perish here. When a soldier dies in battle, no matter where, during the attack or a retreat, he is always considered a hero. But a man who struggles against life, who is overcome by hunger and dies, of him everyone says: he did not know how to manage his life and came to a bad end. . . ."

The following excerpt (*op. cit.*, No. 10, p. 140), by a Warsaw shoemaker, is an example of the unemployed workers' political and philosophical ideas. It was written six years before the outbreak of the Second World War.

" . . . as I read the newspapers I picture to myself the confused interests of the European nations and those in the other parts of the globe; it seems to me that the present situation is like the one after Napoleon was deported to Elba and that a new Waterloo is being prepared, of course under different conditions. This is seen from Germany's threatening behavior as well as from the impossibility of the coexistence for a long time of two mutually exclusive systems, capitalism and communism. Sooner or later there will be a mortal struggle between them. And only after this conflict will mankind be able to formulate a program for creating a good life, but not within this multinational framework, no matter who is the victor. . . ."

The following excerpt (*ibid.*, No. 8, pp. 102-115) is by an unskilled worker from Warsaw.

" . . . While standing in the line I met an acquaintance. Once again he began to talk to me about the bad social conditions, the oppressed classes, the evil government.

" 'What do you mean, evil government?' I was annoyed! 'They give us relief, food, money! And for nothing too! Is that evil?' Then the little clerk said more or less the following: 'My dear

fellow, it's true that we are getting relief, that all over the country committees to help the unemployed are being organized, and this movement is even being carried on in the schools. All that helps. But is it enough, does it cope with the full extent of the disaster? And what is our own part in all this? Is it not the part of beggars? Do we not wait for the gracious gesture of our masters? That's not what we want. We want honest work properly paid for. That is what we must struggle for, not wait for charity. All this assistance is a kind of philanthropy, and philanthropy is stupid, for it helps individuals or small groups, and here the whole community is in question, millions of people. Millions, I repeat, all willing to work and hating to beg for charity. There are unemployed not only in Warsaw, but all over Europe, all over the world! Not thousands of them, but millions. Must we become an army of idlers, waiting for someone's favor? No! We must have work. But this can't be achieved by a stroke of the pen, it must be struggled for, the social order must be changed, for otherwise we are threatened with a disastrous degeneration of society. And all this can be done only by enlightening the masses by arousing in them a social consciousness. An unemployed man who gets winter relief thinks he gets it for nothing, as though it fell from heaven. He is satisfied, but he does not realize that his character has been scarred, scarred deeply with scars of absolute dependence and habits of waiting for charity. But if the unemployed man instead of relief got work, even the humblest work, the whole thing would have a different character. Such a man would know that he had earned his money by accomplishing some task, some function. He would not be a beggar but a workingman. Society must educate people not only physically (feed, clothe, shelter them) but must see to it, even if they do not get a better education that they at least preserve their self-respect. And what is being done in that direction? On the contrary, what is being done is harmful. Yes, Sir. We must look differently at this matter of unemployment and relief. We want work! Honest work, honestly paid for wages instead of relief!

" . . . Meanwhile my turn had come and I got my allowance. I must confess it burned my fingers. Why did this scribbler tell me all these foolish things? What is philanthropy? Social degeneration? A new social order? I don't know what all that means, but I must find out, understand it. Anyhow, it will be possible for some time to live quietly without thinking.

"How good it is when a man has something to eat, when his apartment is warm and he can sleep in peace. If only I could get a decent job and earn some money! Then I could get married, rent a better apartment, take my mother into my home, have children and bring them up.

"Oh, that is an entirely different life! Why is it inaccessible to all? Why must I suffer like this? Why can't I enjoy life as other people do? No doubt because my father was a cab driver and not a banker or a factory owner . . .

". . . Let the President be the President, and the Diet the Diet, and the Senate, too, let them be as they are. Only there must be one more Minister—a Minister for Unemployment. He need not be the stupidest of them, but he should be selected from among the poorest. Such a Minister would do no harm, on the contrary he would render great services, for he would know our real troubles and needs . . . !

". . . Now the worst period has begun for me. I am so disgusted with everything and everyone that I am ready to tear people to pieces. The beast has awakened in me. A beast impotent even physically. My weakness has laid me low, I can barely get up from my bed. Moreover all my aspirations, desires and enthusiasms have been killed in me. It is even hard for me to talk. I am a log, a piece of flesh. And I am surely ill. A heart disease. I often feel that some devilishly sharp saw is sawing my heart and tearing it into fragments. It hurts. And my hands are damp and weak, my breath is short and irregular.

"I don't know what is the scientific name for it, when a man satisfies his frenzied sense himself. Why was it not like this before? Because there was not this endless terrible inactivity, because a different life pulsed in me. Inactivity is not only physical degradation, but perhaps to a greater extent moral degradation. I have no longer any present or future; there are only my senses and death. . . ."

Unemployment weakens the trade-union movement. Fear of the loss of their jobs paralyzes the workers, and their position gradually deteriorates. But while the organizational ties loosen, family and friendship ties become increasingly important, and the family is one of the most important factors in the life of the unemployed. This is proved by many memoirs and field studies made in Poland. Misfortune also creates a new solidarity; the unemployed and hungry have a better understanding of each

other and try to help each other. We have also said before that many Polish workers preserved their connection with the land, some of them had a plot of ground, a little house, a cow. These, of course, fared much better in periods of unemployment, and the Polish workers employed in a factory settlement, that is to say, outside big cities, often tried to buy land, to insure their independence to some extent.

The following excerpt (*ibid.*, No. 15, pp. 164-167) was written by a textile worker from Lodz.

" . . . The conditions of the unemployed and partly employed workers in these times are simply impossible. I will not speak of the first crisis. The present crisis began in our factory in 1929, and we worked two, three, four days a week. In the meantime the management reorganized the work. Where formerly three workers were employed, now there is only one; where five worked, there are only two. Workers who previously tended one loom now must attend two; those who tended two looms now have four. Also a schedule of fines has been introduced. First one group of workers were dismissed, then another. In 1930 we worked only two days a week. Dismissals were made by the management at will, mostly of old workers who had been employed here for thirty years or more. Throughout July and August, 1931, we worked the whole week. Since September I have been working a day and a half. The unskilled workers earn from three to five zlotys, weavers from five to seven. Recently all the workers' books were stamped and they were told that they would be employed on new conditions, that is, with a reduction of 10 per cent in the daily rate. At present only 600 workers are employed. These conditions have caused very bad feelings among the men, they are even hostile toward one another. They must tolerate the worst treatment from the management, lest they be dismissed. The depression is the worst enemy of the worker, it has nullified all their gains and hopes, the trade union movement has been destroyed, for in practice nothing remains of what was won. . . ."

"Family Life of an Unemployed Worker" (from the same Memoirs):

"The apartment is in semi-darkness. In the corner, three children are huddled together. They sit quietly observing their parents. The father sits at the table leaning his head on his

hands and staring at the opposite corner. After a while he turns to the mother with an impatient gesture. 'Stop crying,' he says, 'it has happened. I have lost my job, it's a terrible blow, for at present it is hard to find bread, but despair won't help, somehow we'll get along, I'll get relief. And perhaps . . . perhaps I'll be lucky and get work again in a few weeks. And I am not the only one who has brought this news home—today 300 workers were dismissed in our factory!'

"Mother sat down near her husband and they began to comfort each other. The children saw that the storm had temporarily subsided, they left their corner and resumed their play. The happy moments of childhood!

"Two weeks went by. The last wages received in the factory had been eaten up, relief had not come in yet. Mother bought her groceries on credit, hoping to pay after obtaining relief. Father left early every morning, and came back at nightfall. We waited with hope in our hearts. When he entered all eyes turned toward him. When we saw his gloomy face no one asked him anything. Mother sighed, the children were silent, for they, too, felt the same grief. Mother gave them less food from week to week, she was always worried. Finally we got relief, but how little it was. We could not even pay our debt at the store. Mother put four zlotys aside for an emergency. It is a ridiculous sum, but at that time it was a great deal. Our parents began to have disputes about father's smoking. My father explained that he could not do without cigarettes, because in his grief he would go mad if he did not smoke. 'I'm smoking only the cheapest tobacco,' he said. Mother complained that because of this she had to cut down on the children's bread, and that Mania, the oldest, would be unable to go to school, because her last pair of shoes was gone. Then father sighed and cast a stealthy glance at his own shoes. All day long he ran around looking for jobs, but in vain. Everywhere workers were being laid off."

## WORK

Much place in the workers' memoirs is devoted to their relation to their work. Work is seen not merely as a means of earning subsistence, but as one of the essential elements of life. This is one evidence of the workers' moral health. This is why unemployment creates psychological problems: the lack of work is a spiritual tragedy for the unemployed: they do not want relief which degrades them, but work.



The following excerpt is from the "Memoirs of the Unemployed" (op. cit.) No. 17, by a painter from Lodz (pp. 174-182):

"Tomorrow will be another day, a day when I will find work. Every day I clutch this hope like a plank of salvation. Sometimes I think that this wonderful faith in the morrow which will bring me the glad tidings of work is my last link with life. I want to work. This is the only thing I have in life, so much so, that it is almost impossible to think about it. I feel as if I were walking over an abyss covered with thin boards. These boards are my faith in tomorrow. Tomorrow creates the illusion of improvement in my lot. Today I suffer want, but tomorrow? Tomorrow I may find work, no, I must find it, I must have enough to eat. And my father, mother, and family must have enough to eat. Do you know what hungry men do? Have you ever heard of beings ruled by hunger? It is foolish to say that they are like animals. They are hungry. Hunger rules them, everything they do is the result of hunger. There is the law of the hungry man, besides which human law is a mere invention. But I am not really hungry. . . . Despite my poverty, I am healthy and I have no right to take the attitude that nothing matters or I don't care what happens.

"I drive from me the thought that some day I might not be able to jump out of bed, go out into the streets, feverishly scan the advertisements in the morning newspapers, run down one street after another looking for the sign 'help wanted' in every store. . . .

"If there is anything young in me, it is that . . .

"I am nineteen years old . . .

"Is there a worker for whom relief can replace money honestly earned? Under present-day conditions, when people lose their jobs they see before them idle weeks of relief. This period of relief sucks out their vitality, and dissipates their strength which, without the lull of relief, would have put a radical end to unemployment, as radical as the expulsion of drones from a healthy hive. Collections, sales of boutonnieres, lotteries, etc., are being organized for the unemployed, but why does not the law, that has allegedly been written and perpetuated by society, indict and bring to trial the cause of unemployment, why does it not annihilate this cause by a terrible sentence, as is done to a man who takes what he needs? . . .

"I need work much more than the air I breathe. I cannot just

stand and wait until I am given it. Joblessness twists me, sucks my blood out, destroys me. An alien body is squeezed into my insides, I see everything in a frosty sinister light as desperately hopeless as a silent evening in a family struck by unemployment. . . .

"I know how to recognize people who are looking for work. They have a special gait, a purposeless sort of walk, they wander about looking feverishly to all sides. Early in the morning they go to read the newspaper advertisements posted on boards. Their eyes devour the columns in small print. They absorb the addresses where help is wanted into their brains, into their blood, and they run there. They run in order to be first. They must run. More than one existence is at stake. But at that address there is no store, factory or workshop. They ask. It seems they have made a mistake. They torment themselves trying to remember. But no, it was here, they remember distinctly, it was here. They would never have forgotten the address. They have no right to forget it. And here, as if for spite, there is nothing."

We find few complaints against the necessity to work in our memoirs. The author of Memoir No. 75 in "Workers Write" (op. cit.) Jozef Sepek, whom we have quoted before, was an agricultural worker who later became a coal miner, a waiter, and finally an intellectual worker. First, he describes the difficult and dangerous conditions of work in a Silesian coal mine, and later compares it with work as a waiter in a Cracow restaurant. Although the latter job was easier, he yearned for real work, like the miners'. Mining is a trade that fills the workers with professional pride.

The following excerpt is by Jozef Sepek ("Workers Write," op. cit., pp. 332-335):

"In the mines everywhere there are huge clouds of coal dust and smoke floating in the air. I had to breathe this for eight long hours every day. After the dynamite goes off, the smoke has no outlet because of the low ceiling. In the smoke the miners look like shadows and it is almost impossible for us to see one another. Only the light of the lamps shows where a comrade is. The first time I smelled this stench, I became ill and had to be carried up to the surface half-conscious. There are often damp spots in the shafts. Then a man gets wet through and through. . . .

"I lived in the dormitory, a kind of barracks with a canteen where one can eat. There were at least twenty of us in one room. Everywhere one could smell the stench of carbide. Conditions were lamentable. Because I was one of the youngest . . . I often had to put up with the whims of the older workers, and run various errands for them. So here, too, there were antagonisms. I often wondered how people who were crushed under the same misfortune could still annoy one another, especially the weaker among them. It would be a good thing if the young workers were kept in a separate room. I earned 60 German marks every two weeks, half of which went for my keep and the rest for clothing and other personal needs. I was always glad when payday approached because I knew then that I would be able to buy myself something. From time to time I gave mother part of my earnings. Once at Christmas when I went home I took a piece of coal in my knapsack, I carried it out of the shaft myself, as a tangible proof of my work, for her to heat her stove with. . . .

"After a year of this hard work I left the place with regret. Although I was always in a sweat and was never sure that I would see the surface of the earth again, I conceived a liking for this work. The infernal noise of the machines vibrating in the rhythm of work was like a song to me. I worked hard, but I was never tired or bored; and every third week, I was on the night shift. I preferred this work ten times better than working in the village or in an office with an employer. Before working in the mines I never had any leisure, now I have had plenty of it. I could study university courses and I knew that I was making progress. Now I have an even better understanding of the advantages for the worker of the eight-hour day. Once I had done my job I was free for sixteen hours. On the farm I worked sixteen hours a day at least, and I was always exhausted and torpid, and did not sleep well. I realize that in the future even the hardest work will be a pleasure and a benefit, for it will be done for only a limited number of hours, precluding fatigue. Work may go on forever, but it will tire no one and will be done more efficiently. Work should not be a burden but a pleasure when everyone works, but today only one works while ten are idle. The effect of unemployment on a man's mind I will not discuss here, we all know it only too well; I know it from my own experience, because sometimes I, too, was without work.

" . . . Shortly after I left the mine, I went to Cracow. I had

an uncle there with whose help I got a job in a restaurant. . . . The food was first-class. The housing conditions were fairly good. My relation with the boss was satisfactory. I was used to work and I always tried to work in such a way as to satisfy my superiors. But I did not like this kind of occupation. I preferred to work underground in the conditions described above."

In young workers we often find a strong predilection for mechanics. Thus, the young author of Memoir No. 52 quoted below writes: "after much wandering about in glassworks and workshops I finally found my trade." It was mechanics. He liked it, although the working conditions were difficult and his boss was brutal. He has an admirable ability to distinguish between his boss as a human being, who aroused hatred in him, and as an expert in his field, whom he respected.

(From "Workers Write," *op. cit.*, Memoir No. 52, by Michal Gieniek, mechanic of Piotrkow, pp. 158-162):

". . . This was a large workshop, a smithy and foundry. There were more than twenty apprentices. The boss . . . was a very capable artisan-trader, a first-class 'calculator' as we call it. He tried to put his workshop on the most efficient technical basis possible, on the American style. Disposing of labor power that cost him nothing—apprentices—he kept them busy from 10 to 12 hours a day, and sometimes even longer.

"Some worked such long hours because the boss did not take any fees from them, others wanted to be released before the normal three-year term, still others explained that they wanted to learn all the different kinds of jobs, and finally some were given a zloty as a reward for driving the others.

"The boss willingly listened to all informers, he kept a sharp eye on the dissatisfied elements. He often struck the boys in the face if he felt like it, or sent them home to get their fathers. And he demoralized the young people thoroughly. He saw only money in every contract, nothing else.

"To work fast and well was his principle. Yet he was a man above the average, if in addition to his above-mentioned qualities, one considers his mind and character, especially his will power, and the energy and the tenacity with which he developed his workshop without regard for the sacrifices it entailed. His was a real school, not only professional, but social, a school

based on the bitterest exploitation of children under age.

"During my stay there I learned the immense power of courage. The boss had phosphorescent eyes, a sort of magnetism in them which nailed you to one spot, and a firm will was needed to lie to those eyes. To speak the truth to the boss or to lie outrageously as only a good liar can floored him. He was full of bravado when dealing with people weaker than he, unsure of themselves. But he was helpless with strong people.

"When it happened that I broke a drill or a screwdriver . . . I went directly to him and told him that I had broken it. Usually he spat and abused me, calling me a swineherd, and a louse . . . but he never questioned my higher intellectual faculties. However, if a boy came to him and stammered: 'Sir, something is broken . . .' he yelled: 'You broke it, and you haven't got the simple courage to admit it,' and he would call the lad an imbecile, an idiot and every other conceivable term of opprobrium.

"Under these conditions two types of apprentices developed: cowards who were afraid to begin a job lest the boss 'delicately' upbraid them; and the others, often fairly loyal to the boss, but not always ready to do exactly what he wanted of them. This depended upon whether the boss's order was reasonable or not. Once I remember he asked me to make a key for a little lock. I was still green, and was advised to cut it out of sheet-metal and drill a hole in it. That was what I did, but the boss did not like it, he got stubborn, and wanted me to drop what I had done (I was already half through) and make another lock from rolled metal. I saw that it was a crazy idea, so I said to myself: 'No, I'll make that key my own way, and that's all there is to it!' And I made it. He yelled, and cursed, and abused me, but I remained standing calmly at my table and worked on. When I finished he shut his trap and that was the end of it.

"My philosophy grew increasingly clear. I respected the expert in the boss, but with all the strength of my simple soul I hated him. He called me a Bolshevik and said that I demoralized his whole workshop. . . .

"I was really interested in mechanics, otherwise I would never have had the strength to finish my apprenticeship under such conditions.

"Forging, sawing, planing, turning and all forms of metal work were to me as gratifying as the results of my labor themselves. Starting and shutting the machines, working on them,

their measured movements mechanically determined in advance, the rhythmic or jerky pattern of the cylinders, all this aroused in me the desire to acquire new knowledge. Under the influence of this work I felt my chest swell, my nostrils dilate, and my heart pound in time with the beat of the machine. Just as formerly I had wanted to know all the secrets of human life, so I now threw myself on machines. I wanted to know all their laws and secrets. . . . At that time I began to be interested in electricity, especially radio. I wanted a quiet apartment at any cost where I could devote myself to study and tinkering with machines."

The following is from Memoir No. 57 ("Memoirs of Unemployed," *op. cit.*, pp. 580 sqq.), by a worker in an oil refinery, who lived at Wygoda, Stanislawow province. He gives us a moving picture of a simple man's attitude toward work—a picture very different from what many intellectuals imagine.

"I wanted to be a mechanic. When the Russians withdrew [during First World War] I got a job at shaft No. 12, 2nd section, in the 'Dabrowa' works. The shaft was being pumped and I was the all powerful ruler of the drilling tower. My joy was indscribable. I myself started the machine in the morning and shut it off at night. I myself measured the oil in the reservoir. . . . I loved my machine, and the crane which shook as a horse shakes his head on a hot day, and the tower with a broken crown. I thoroughly studied the shaft. The director rarely came here, so for hours I clambered on to the corners of the tower. My greatest pleasure was to climb on the outer wall along the frame to the top, and there to glide down on the steel cable. In bad weather I sat on the swaying crane and meditated. Sometimes, for a change, I mounted the siren . . . by fixing two little pipes at right angles. . . ."

## BOOKS

The Polish working class movement played a very important role in spreading literacy and an interest in reading. The network of proletarian educational organizations known as the Society of Workers' Universities (abbreviated as TUR) developed widespread activity, which reached into the remotest corners, despite material difficulties and the lack of instructors. Aside from TUR, there were other important organizations, as

for instance the Society for People's Schools (abbreviated as TSL). In the larger cities, the workers' organizations had large libraries, and many intellectuals participated in the work of enlightenment as instructors. The situation was much less favorable in the provinces, especially the remoter ones.

The following excerpt is from the memoirs of a worker from the Jasielsk district who attended school only six months in all his life ("Workers Write," Memoir No. 4, pp. 39-44):

" . . . I think it was 1919, in the spring, I do not remember exactly when, that the director read to us in the workshop a law about the immediate introduction of the eight-hour day, English weekends, paid vacations, etc. There was great enthusiasm among the workers. Everyone was gay and smiling, there was much talk about an independent Poland, about the workers' organizations and the Socialists. It was as though the world was being reborn. There were many workers who had been at the front, and they cursed war. This talk appealed to me very much. The idea of organization began to acquire importance for all of us. More leisure time, and regulated wages had an encouraging effect. The workers flocked into the unions. There they would talk their fill, there something was going on. Even in the workshops there were lively discussions. The worker had a new dignity. I myself was proud when I heard someone say that all these benefits had been achieved by the working class representatives in the government.

"I joined with the others. Our association became my second home, for me it was something entirely new. I was exhilarated when I heard upstanding workers banging their fists on the table and boldly state their views. I loved to hear fiery speeches, they uplifted me. With such people, I thought, one can see the world and learn its secrets. Ah, to go away somewhere, to seize a powerful hammer and swing it, forge something, do something, so that all the people in the world would be forever gay and happy! There my own problems were discussed, there what I felt and could not express was expressed. Oh, if I could express myself like that I would have jumped on a table, a fence, a roof, and shouted for all the world to hear that the people were being wronged, that the world was pursuing an evil course, that everyone had a right to a decent life.

"When comrade K. from Stanislawow spoke of poverty-stricken and anemic mothers, of young overworked children,

I thought of my own brother, of his long thin hands that had so early been broken into difficult tasks, of his prematurely old face, of how often he lay sick. I felt like crying because his lost childhood could never be given back to him. And while my brother worked hard, other boys of his age, children of bourgeois, laughed happily, amused themselves, went on excursions, studied and lived off the fat of the land.

"Everything imaginable was discussed in the workers' organizations. I was most interested in problems like the origin of man, the solar system, matter and energy, etc. Unfortunately one could not learn anything from the talks that we had, they only scratched the surface. People spoke up at random without any knowledge of the subject, they often quarreled, each one wanting his view to prevail.

"Immediately after work, as soon as I had washed, I ran to the library, and locked myself up in the stacks with 'The Works of Szajnocha' [Polish historian, 1818-1868], 'The Yearbooks of the Literary Weekly,' Thomas More's 'Utopia,' etc. All this reading gave me headaches. I dreamed of the titles of books. Not one of these books struck a real chord in me, if I may say so. What I was looking for, what I wanted to know, I did not find. I became more and more impatient. The years went by, and I did not learn anything vital. I felt that I was moving away from something very precious. Whenever I saw a few books, I was overwhelmed with curiosity, and at the same time I was more and more often afraid of them. I feared books that I could not understand—buzzing in my ears and severe headaches tormented me. Even at work I thought of books, and considered myself the greatest dunce in the world. I reproached my parents because they had not sent me to school. I would gladly have worked even harder if only I could have really studied. . . .

"In Stanislawow I rushed to the bookstore. I looked at the show windows full of books. So many books. If only I could have all of them. From children's stories, through cabaret songs, to the most important scientific works, everything tempted me. But I was seized by fear. To be intelligent one must read everything. There were thousands of books ranging from the 'Domestic Cook' to sociological and philosophical works. Lord! I would never find my way. True, I had the 'Guide for Autodidacts' by Smoluchowski, but that was designed for graduate students.

"I squeezed my money in my hand, 25 zlotys. I reflected that I could buy several small books, or one big one. But how the



devil could I decide which book to buy, so that for once at least I would have something suitable. I was dizzy, all the alluring titles danced around in my head. I was in despair. 'How to Make a Fortune,' 'Historical Sketches,' 'Mathematics,' 'War Stories,' 'Psychology,' 'Anthropology,' 'Literature,' etc. I felt weak. I saw some men walk into the bookshop and come out with some pamphlets in their hands. Brightly and boldly, they asked for such and such a book. They knew in advance what they wanted, even when they left home they had the idea of buying that very book. How intelligent such a man must be! I have never known what book I wanted. I was disappointed so many times. Only after cutting the pages did I realize that I could not understand anything of the book. I made an effort to read it, but to no avail. This exhausted me, and I conceived an ever increasing fear of that unconquered fortress, which was science.

"Now I stood transfixed in front of Jasielski's bookshop. Passers-by were beginning to notice me. I must have looked suspicious. I had to make up my mind. I chose three titles: 'Manual for Drivers,' 'On the Silver Globe,' and 'Operative Surgery.' I went in. Someone greeted me politely—as if she knew me. I lost my breath. 'May I help you?' the sympathetic lady asked me. 'Please, give me a copy of the "Manual for Drivers,"' I said timidly. 'By whom?' she asked. I did not understand what she wanted. I blushed visibly, but I said, 'please give me "Operative Surgery," also.' 'You want Weglowski's "Orka,"' she said and began at once to climb up the shelves, like a cat. This emboldened me. 'Please give me "On the Silver Globe" [a novel by Zulawski, well-known Polish writer, 1874–1915], also,' I said in a slightly louder tone. 'What on the silver globe?' the amiable lady asked. And again I was stunned . . . 'I want a book of that name,' I said in a low voice. . . ."

The following excerpt is from Memoir No. 19, by a barber from Warsaw (*ibid.*, pp. 238–241):

". . . from that slumber I was awakened by an inconspicuous old man, wronged by life and approaching its end, the painter Kastro. This man I can really call my teacher. He read a great deal and remembered much of what he read. Life had taught him to distinguish truth from falsehood. He thundered against the ruling classes of today and olden times, and against the

guilty among the clergy and laymen. He was a sincere patriot and democrat. Thanks to him I began to look differently at the figures of the past and to subject them to criticism. I was sensitive and everything beautiful impressed me. I did not like everyday humdrum life. I was impressed by people like Garibaldi, Washington, Czarniecki [a Polish statesman and leader of the seventeenth century] who after a period of heroism returned to a quiet existence and when there was no need of their former greatness, hid it as though ashamed of it. I was never impressed by riches, but science occupied first place in my eyes. . . .

" . . . I shared a room with a young tailor. When I met him for the first time he made a strange impression on me. He was small and thin and his face which had a cynical expression was strangely pale. From my conversations with him I realized that he was a Socialist, that he had wide knowledge in every field and that he expressed himself skeptically about everything. He was not attractive, he was taciturn, and he read constantly. He went to work early, returning at night. In our conversations our views frequently clashed, but he always had the upper hand. Yet he did not convince me. He gave me Hacckel's 'Monist History' to read, and this book overcame my previous dogmas and familiarized me with a number of new sciences, like geology, astronomy and biology. I read this book several times with the help of Aycl's vocabulary of foreign terms; it really interested me a great deal. . . ."



*Part Four*

THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN POLAND



---

## Polish Socialism

---

The idea that unified the Polish working class and made it a political force considerably exceeding its numerical strength as compared with the rest of Polish society was socialism. It found adherents in Poland at a very early date, for it was directly connected with the Polish insurrections and their democratic traditions. After the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, several armed insurrections against the invaders took place, and there were also numerous minor rebellions and conspiracies. These actions, beginning with the Kosciuszko insurrections of 1794, which through its leader was associated with the Revolutionary War in America, were always carried out under democratic slogans. It is true that despite some efforts in this direction they failed to solve the social problem of the peasantry; but they put forward democratic political slogans and progressive social programs, and it was in the name of democracy that the Polish people fought from the end of the eighteenth century, throughout the nineteenth century, on all the barricades where men bled for freedom.

Beginning with the 1830's all the struggles against national servitude were supported by the young socialist movement. This movement also opposed Russian despotism that particularly oppressed the Poles. No wonder that the Polish exiles, many of them coming from the small nobility and loyal to the radical opinions they had formed in Poland, saw in socialism the solution of the problems of Europe.

After the insurrection of 1831, the radical Polish exiles adhered to socialism in its utopian French form. In 1835, Polish exiles formed a socialist organization, "The Polish People," in London, in Portsmouth and on the island of Jersey among some peasant soldiers who had found shelter in England after the failure of the uprising against Tsarism. The founder of this

movement, Stanislaw Gabriel Worcell, lies buried in London in Highgate Cemetery. Another well-known socialist was Joachim Lelewel, Minister of the insurrectionist government of 1831, brilliant Polish historian and author of the theory of the Slavic "community rule." Lelewel was in contact with Russian revolutionary exiles like Herzen and Bakunin. The great Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, expressed his political views in the French publication "*Tribune des Peuples*," and his articles, mature, courageous, and written in the spirit of contemporary socialism, have not lost their timeliness even today. Szymon Konarski secretly visited Poland as the emissary of the Polish circles abroad, and spread revolutionary ideas; he believed that the Polish uprising must be a people's revolution based on the peasantry. Konarski had friends in Wilno, where the Russian authorities got wind of his activities, and shot him in 1839.

#### "THE SPRING OF NATIONS"

The socialist elements displayed their greatest vigor in the Cracow uprising of 1846, which had been prepared, among others, by a group of socialists influenced by Saint Simon and other French thinkers. Their leader was Edward Dembowski who, disguised as a mountaineer (Goral) or peasant, traveled throughout the Carpathian regions preaching revolution to the people. The uprising of 1846 in the Free City of Cracow (created by the Congress of Vienna) had both a national and a socialist character. The revolutionary government proclaimed the social revolution in one of its decrees, the newspapers used socialist phraseology, and current pamphlets explained the ideas of the French socialists. But the "spring of the nations" was short in this region: the weak insurrectionary forces could not resist the Austrian army. Edward Dembowski, the hero of the Cracow uprising, fell on the market place of Podgorze, a Cracow suburb, resisting a charge by Austrian dragoons.

The Cracow uprising proclaimed the emancipation of the peasants and promised them land. Such a revolutionary movement represented a great danger to the Austrian occupants, for the combination of social and national slogans might easily take hold of the masses. In order to frustrate this movement, the Austrian authorities organized a peasant counter-revolution with sham revolutionary slogans, and the peasants led by Szela, with the secret permission of the Austrian police, began to slaughter the nobility in the villages. Thus they were diverted

from the genuine revolutionary movement. Karl Marx wrote about this uprising in the *New Rhenish Gazette* (August 1, 1848) in the following terms: "Since the Cracow uprising of 1846 the struggle for Polish independence is also the struggle of agrarian democracy, the only possible democracy in Eastern Europe, against patriarchal-feudal absolutism."

In the revolutionary movement of 1848 the Poles played an important part as fighters for political and social freedom, and there was not a barricade in Europe that was not drenched with Polish blood.

#### THE INSURRECTION OF 1863, THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871

After the "spring of nations," the democratic movement subsided in Europe and in Poland, not to be revived till the 1860's. In 1863 the long latent and well prepared uprising known as the January Insurrection broke out. Neither in the movement preceding this insurrection nor in the insurrection itself do we find socialist slogans, although there were many radical democratic slogans: nevertheless, ties were then formed between the Russian revolutionaries and the Polish insurrectionists. The Poles understood the importance of an alliance between their insurrection and revolutionary Russia, and in 1862 "The Central National Committee" concluded a pact with Herzen, the representative of Russian socialism. In the letter addressed by the committee to the editors of the *Kolokol* in London, the radical and national character of the uprising is clearly expressed: "You see, gentlemen, that the fundamental idea of the Polish movement is national, that there is not a trace of the nobility's conservatism in it, that it strives to abolish class differences, and to secure land for the peasants. The differences between our and your approach to the peasant problem derives from our different social foundations and circumstances. The Russian movement is agrarian (social) ours is national. In Russia, the agrarian movement will develop political freedom, in Poland, social reorganization can only be the result of the reconquest of freedom and independence."

Two characteristics were to mark the whole subsequent Polish socialist and revolutionary movement: the first was the tie-up between social emancipation and the cause of national freedom, as expressed in the letter to the *Kolokol*; the second was the



revolutionary dynamism which put Polish groups in the forefront of the socialist movement in Tsarist Russia.

The pact between the Polish insurrectionists and the Russian socialists was not a new development, for earlier the Russian Decembrists and Polish democrats had been closely connected.

In the course of the long period of struggles of liberation against Tsarism, the Poles were far from being narrowly nationalistic, and Polish insurrectionist movements showed sympathy with the progressive anti-Tsarist elements of Russian society, while they hated servitude, Tsarism, and the oppressive system of government. The Russian revolutionaries strove to overthrow Tsarism and change the Russian form of government and social order; the Polish revolutionaries strove to throw off the foreign yoke, to emancipate their nation and simultaneously to set it on the path of social progress.

In 1864 when the First International was created in London, the 1863 insurrection and the Polish cause were identified with the struggle against despotism, and figured as a fundamental goal of the organization, an essential element of proletarian policy. Once again socialism spread in the new Polish emigration, and in 1866 a Polish socialist periodical began to be published in Geneva, under the title, *Gmina* (Community).

In 1871, when the Paris Commune resisted the invaders and the native reactionaries, its armed forces were led by Polish generals, famous insurrectionists and veterans of 1863: Jaroslaw Dombrowski, Wacław Wroblewski and a large staff of senior and junior officers. Dombrowski lost his life on the walls of Paris with hundreds of others, while many Poles who only a few years before had organized the insurrection against the Tsar in the Polish woods and fought engagements with the Russian troops were shot at the Menilmontant cemetery.

After the fall of the Commune, Wroblewski fled to London where he became a friend of Marx and Engels and entered the General Council of the First International as the Polish delegate. With Marx and Lavrov, he spoke at the meetings held in London in 1875 and 1876 to commemorate the Polish insurrections, and the cause of Polish independence and socialism remained closely connected. However, for the time being socialist ideology found adherents chiefly among the Polish exiles, and there was no mass movement of workers. Although during the Cracow uprising Dembowski had succeeded in winning a handful of artisans, the socialist movement could not develop prop-

erly because it lacked the necessary basis: heavy industry and an industrial proletariat.

#### BEGINNINGS OF THE POLISH SOCIALIST UNDERGROUND

Little by little socialism found a natural milieu in the part of Poland occupied by Russia. Industry began to grow rapidly there, the proletariat increased in numbers, and the tradition of the recent uprisings remained alive. The proletariat in the Congress Kingdom began to manifest its specific dynamism, at first without political organization. In 1871 the first strikes broke out in the metallurgical industry, and in 1874 the first struggle took place based on an agreement between the workers in several factories; both these movements had a purely economic character. Positivism, not socialism, still held a leading place in the thinking of progressive circles, for the exhaustion caused by the last uprising, and the lack of faith in the success of a new armed struggle among a people that had lost its best men in revolutionary battles and before firing squads, acted as a strong argument in favor of the gradualist slogans of the positivists. Their spiritual leaders were the brilliant writer, Aleksander Swietochowski, and the prominent Polish novelist, Boleslaw Prus, who preached work from the "bottom" in order to raise Poland economically and culturally. (Cf. Chapter 1, p. 19.)

Yet socialism had by that time penetrated into Poland and had a certain influence on the proletariat, which is evidenced by a document addressed by the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery to the Governor, dated August 24, 1873, containing an accurate prediction: "Of all the lands belonging to His Imperial Majesty, the Kingdom of Poland more than any other constitutes a favorable ground for the International." The Third Section then recommended the creation of a mixed commission composed of factory owners and Russian officials, "to investigate to what extent there is at present any socialist agitation among the workers in the Kingdom of Poland and what measures are advisable on the part of the government as well as private owners in order to preserve our land from being penetrated by the International and similar associations."

The organization that was spreading the socialist idea, so dangerous for Tsarism, was *Proletariat*, which began as a students' circle and was the germ of the future powerful Polish working class movement. This first organization found a fertile field; the workers had proved by their strikes that they were

ready and waiting for the new "idée-force" which had entered the country by various channels.

In 1874 Polish students in Kiev and Petersburg formed socialist circles, some of them moving to Warsaw to work there also, among them Ludwik Warynski, the leader of the Socialist youth. He was a gifted man who attracted the idealistic young people and exerted considerable influence on students and young workers, and together with his comrades he formed workers' circles, and established contact with the parts of Poland occupied by Germany and Austria.

Government repression began, but it did not break the spirit of the socialists. The imprisoned leaders were replaced by others, and some went to Galicia where the laws were more liberal; there Warynski founded a secret, but quite numerous, organization of young socialists. The socialist movement had begun to develop at an earlier date in Lwow where Boleslaw Limanowski, later the spiritual leader of Polish socialism, took refuge after the insurrection of 1863.

Polish socialism finally emerged from underground and reached the general public thanks to the judicial authorities. The first anti-socialist trial in Poland took place in Lwow in 1878, without attracting much attention, but the second in Cracow in 1880 was very conspicuous thanks to the magnificent speeches of the accused, among them Ludwik Warynski and Stanislaw Mendelson. The following year Warynski returned to Warsaw to tighten the loose socialist circles into a close-knit and militant socialist party, and thus, in 1882, there was born the "Social-Revolutionary Party—Proletariat" headed by a Workers' Committee. The *Proletariat* rapidly spread its influence to other industrial centers, and socialist ideas won more and more adherents among the Polish youth. In St. Petersburg, too, a group of future leaders founded "The Polish-Lithuanian Social Revolutionary Party" which soon drew close to the *Proletariat*.

Just as during the previous uprising the Poles had sought an understanding with the new Russian revolutionaries, so now the *Proletariat* made friendly contact with the *Narodnaya Volya* which was carrying on a heroic fight against Tsarism. The two organizations reached a formal agreement in 1884, in which each preserved its independence, but swore to fight Tsarism together.

The *Proletariat* now began illegal activity, issuing procla-

mations, publishing an illegal periodical called *Proletariat*, and taking part in all the workers' day-to-day struggles. In 1883 a wave of strikes swept Warsaw, Lodz and Zyrardow; the government sent troops to Zyrardow and there occurred the first armed clash in Poland since 1863, resulting in many killed and wounded, a fact which the party emphasized in its publication in an article entitled "1863-1883." In the course of the two following years the authorities arrested nearly 200 active members of the *Proletariat*, and on January 28, 1886, the first gallows since the last uprising was erected on the slopes of the Warsaw citadel. The militant intellectuals, Stanislaw Kunicki and Piotr Bardowski, and the workers Michal Ossowski and Jan Petruszkiewicz were hanged—the first Polish socialists executed by the Tsarist courts. Before dying Kunicki addressed a letter to the workers, which is an example of the spirit and courage of these early socialists.

"Brother-Workers: I am glad of this opportunity to address a few words to you before dying. The hangman's sword will soon gleam over our heads, but fear is far from our hearts. For we know why we are dying and for what purpose we must give our lives. It is for you now, brothers, to ensure that our sacrifice be not in vain. Courage and tenacity! Let us not forget that we can conquer our rights, of which we have been deprived for so many centuries, only by our own efforts; that only in ourselves can we find strength and hope for the difficult struggles we are waging.

"Let not the severe penalties which have been meted out to us deter you.

"Fewer of us would have perished now had it not been for the work of traitors; thus in this respect, too, it is up to you not to increase the number of victims. Be careful in your activities; do not trust the first man who comes your way. Yet caution must not weaken your energy. Do not abandon our banner; hold it high, and you will be victorious.

"These, my brothers, are my last words, my will, which I send to you.

"And now, my beloved friends, if any of you has preserved even a part of the attachment you once had for me, understand, that in these inadequate phrases I wish to communicate to you all my love for the cause for which I am dying and all my friendship for you with whom I have worked.

"I send a thousand embraces and greetings to all who know and remember me. I fraternally shake the hands of those who were my companions-in-arms.

"I embrace you with all my heart for the last time. Be happy and remember 'Red Gregoi' [Kunicki's revolutionary pseudonym.]

"Stanislaw Kunicki,

"X Pavilion, December 23, 1885."

Other leaders of the movement were sentenced to long-term imprisonment in the Schluesselburg fortress, the famous Tsarist political prison, where Warynski committed suicide. Dozens of young men again took the path of the insurrectionists of 1863 and were sent to Siberia. Some were unable to endure the hardships of this long trek. But meanwhile the *Proletariat* had created the foundations of a workers' movement, and the day of conspiratorial students' circles had passed. The *Proletariat* succeeded in creating a workers' organization and drew the intellectual youth into it, although among the circles of this young stratum still in process of formation, the positivists predominated among the progressive elements.

The Tenth Pavilion later often figured in the martyrology of the Polish working class movement, and Kunicki's spirit has survived until this day. The first members of the *Proletariat* soon passed into history and the anniversary of the execution of the four leaders was observed by Polish workers' organizations.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the *Proletariat* had outgrown the stage of a student's circle is attested by the numerous strikes organized or supported by this organization, as well as by its publications and proclamations. It is also proved by the form of the "strike fund" organizations from which the mass movement started, although later this form was abandoned. Finally, a study of the long lists of those sentenced in the trials of the *Proletariat* is another evidence; here one finds workers in many trades, weavers, carpenters, metal workers, and shoemakers, in addition to students who brought revolutionary theory to the working masses. The *Proletariat* was soon rebuilt with the help of new leaders, and a new organization, *Zwiazek* (Union), made

<sup>1</sup> Warynski, Kunicki, and their comrades became a legend in the Polish Socialist and labor movement. "Hero-worship" in Macaulay's sense has always played an important part in Polish socialism. According to this great English historian, the heroes "were leaders of men . . . the modelers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or attain. . . ." The militant socialists who fought against the Tsarist rule were such "modelers and patterns" for their followers, and thanks to them Polish socialism has preserved a romantic spirit.

its appearance. The latter advocated a purely economic, trade union struggle.

The international Socialist Congress of 1889 proclaimed May 1st the day of a general strike and a workers' holiday, and the Polish delegation heartily supported this move. On May 1, 1890, eight thousand workers struck in Warsaw alone, and there were several strikes in Austrian-occupied Poland, but it took two years before May 1st became a mass movement. On that day, in 1892, there was a great strike in Warsaw, and in the provinces the strike was general. The workers demanded the eight-hour day and a 15% raise in wages; the factory owners were willing to make concessions, but the authorities would not allow them to do so. The Governor-General in Warsaw issued brief instructions: "Shoot, do not spare cartridges," while the police provoked anti-Jewish riots for which the social scum was mobilized, and used them as a pretext for sending troops against the striking workers. This led to bloody clashes, 1,000 persons were arrested, 200 were wounded, and several dozen lost their lives.

The demonstration was a proof of the growing influence of socialism, for this time the masses of the workers, and not merely particular factories, responded to the call of the secret organization.

#### BIRTH OF THE PPS (POLISH SOCIALIST PARTY)

Although the socialist labor movement was growing into a powerful political force in Poland, it was not ideologically homogeneous, but was composed of several groups, among which the strongest and largest was the *Proletariat* with its heroic history behind it.

The times demanded the consolidation of the labor movement, which was achieved at a delegates' conference in Paris, in 1892. The émigrés, who maintained close contact with Poland, as usual played an important part in this development. The program adopted at the Paris Conference, the so-called "Paris Program," expressed the unification of the various tendencies within the socialist movement, and had a strikingly democratic character. Independence, federalism, and political and social democracy constitute its fundamental elements. We quote it here in full:

"The Polish Socialist Party, as the political organization of the Polish labor class, struggling for liberation from the yoke of capitalism, strives above all to overthrow the present political

slavery and to obtain power for the proletariat. In this striving its aim is: An independent Democratic Republic, based on the following principles:

#### POLITICAL

1. Direct, universal and secret suffrage, a people's legislation conceived as both sanctional and initiative;
2. Complete equality of the rights of the nationalities forming part of the Republic on the basis of voluntary federation;
3. Community and provincial self-government with the election of administrative officers;
4. Equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, race, nationality or creed;
5. Complete freedom of speech, press, meeting and association;
6. Free court procedure, election of judges, and responsibility of officers before the court;
7. Free, obligatory, universal, complete education; students are to be supplied with means of livelihood by the state;
8. Abolition of a stable army; general arming of the people;
9. Progressive income and property tax; similar inheritance tax; abolition of all taxes on food and other prime necessities.

#### ECONOMIC

1. Labor legislation:
  - a. An eight-hour working day, regular thirty-six hour interruption every week;
  - b. Minimum wages;
  - c. Equal pay for women and men for equal work;
  - d. Prohibition of work for children up to fourteen years of age; limitation of the work of juveniles (from fourteen to sixteen) to six hours per day;
  - e. Prohibition of night work as a matter of principle;
  - f. Factory hygiene;
  - g. State insurance in case of accident, unemployment, sickness and old age;
  - h. Factory inspectorate elected by the workers themselves;
  - i. Labor exchanges and workers' secretariat;
  - j. Complete freedom of workers' strikes;

2. Gradual nationalization of land, instruments of production and means of communication."

The new Polish Socialist Party became a member of the Second International, and the Polish trade unions, first in Austrian-occupied Poland, and later in independent Poland, joined the International trade unions' organization. In both internationals the Polish labor movement played an active part.

After the Paris Conference a "Union of Polish Socialists Abroad" was created. A short time later, as a result of the intervention of the Russian government, the Polish socialist exiles in Paris were forced to leave for London, where they brought out several publications, and consolidated their movement ideologically. A number of socialist leaders destined to play a prominent role in Poland lived through the Paris and London emigration. Boleslaw Limanowski and Stanislaw Mendelson, one of the ideologists of the movement, were there. Jozef Pilsudski, Stanislaw Wojciechowski and Ignacy Moscicki, future presidents of Poland, and Jodko-Narkiewicz, the future Polish ambassador in Riga, played prominent roles, as did Leon Wasilewski, an expert on the problems of nationalities and the future first Foreign Minister of Poland, and Boleslaw Jedrzejowski, a socialist writer and leader.

In 1893, soon after the Paris Conference, at a secret meeting in the Ponarski mountains near Wilno, the delegates of the socialist movement in Russian-occupied Poland adopted the Paris program as the program of the Polish Socialist Party. Thus the powerful Polish labor party was born. A Central Executive Committee was elected at that meeting, and the party began the publication of its central organ *Robotnik* (The Worker). It goes without saying that in Russian-occupied Poland the socialist movement was illegal.

#### OTHER SOCIALIST PARTIES

In 1895 another socialist party was formed in Poland; the "Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania" (abbreviated as SDKPL). Among the leaders of this party were Warski-Warszawski, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, Felix Dzierzhinsky, and Unschlicht, who later played a prominent part in the Russian revolution. Thus a split was created, which only emphasized tendencies that had existed since the earliest days of Polish socialism, and had begun to manifest themselves at the time of the founding of the *Proletariat*. These tendencies re-



sulted from the partition of Poland. Her national servitude profoundly influenced the political ideas of the PPS, which fought both for social emancipation and Polish independence, Poland as a people's republic. The more orthodox internationalists opposed the slogans of independence and believed that the struggle should be waged only for the realization of socialist ideals. In their view, the struggle for socialism was to be carried on within the framework of Russia as a whole, without separating Poland as an independent country. The PPS passionately fought against this faction of internationalists belonging to the SDKPL. Later this group combined with the so-called PPS-Left, which split off from the original party and formed the Polish Communist Party in 1918.

The wide scope of the PPS activities now required that its relationships with the movements of other nationalities be regularized. In Lithuania, the Lithuanian Social Democracy founded in 1896 published its illegal organs in Polish (*Robotnik Litewski*—The Lithuanian Worker). The Central Committee of the PPS recognized the organizational identity and the revolutionary tasks of the Lithuanian groups, defined as those which used the Lithuanian language in their agitation, although they did not approve of the tendencies of the Lithuanian Social Democracy, which later acquired a purely national character. The PPS supported the Byelorussian organization *Hromada*, and maintained contacts with the Ukrainian Socialist Party whose program was modeled on that of the PPS and the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party. It also aided to some extent the Latvian movement and kept in touch with the growing Russian movement.

At that time the Jewish socialist movement was also born. The Jewish workers had fought in the ranks of the Polish Socialist Party almost from its beginning and for that reason the party had separate publications in the Yiddish language (*Der Arbeiter*—The Worker). An important part was played by the Jewish publications smuggled into Russia from the United States. But in the eastern regions of Poland, numerous circles of Jewish socialist intellectuals began to form, and in 1897 there was a congress of these circles in Lithuania, and soon afterwards the Jewish Socialist Party *Bund* was founded. The spiritual leader of this "General Jewish Workers' Union" was Vladimir Medem. But the PPS recognized the Jewish movement only within the organizational framework common to both and re-

fused to recognize a separate organization. Its resolutions emphasized that the Jewish proletariat on Polish territory should be in organizational unity with the PPS. Political reality and the struggle against Tsarism later brought the PPS and the *Bund* together.

#### THE POLISH SOCIALIST-DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPSD) IN THE AUSTRIAN-OCCUPIED PART OF POLAND

While in the Russian-occupied part of Poland the socialist movement was carried on underground and had a revolutionary character, the situation in Austrian-occupied Poland was different, because here the constitution afforded an opportunity for parliamentary struggle. There the Polish socialist movement assumed a mass character, and was of the Western European type, although it was closely connected with the PPS in the Russian-occupied part of Poland. Galicia also saw the earliest Polish trade unions. The first ones were formed by the printers, and in 1870 the first typesetters' strike broke out in Lwow, where the first workers' periodicals also were published by the printers. Exiles from the Russian-occupied part of Poland always played a prominent role in the socialist movement in Galicia, while socialist centers arose also in Cracow, and at that time Ignacy Daszynski, the gifted socialist leader and a born tribune of the people, began his activity. Socialist weeklies and later dailies appeared in Cracow and Lwow, and the movement gradually spread among the broad masses. Ukrainian leaders such as Ivan Franko the Ukrainian writer, Mikolaj Hankiewicz, and others, participated in the movement and later founded the Ukrainian Socialist Party. The Polish Socialist-Democratic Party (PPSD), which was the Galician counterpart of the PPS, also comprised a Jewish section. Thus the problem of nationalities was organizationally solved, and in addition the programmatic prerequisites for reconciliation of the nationalities living in Galicia were created. The Galician party attracted numerous young intellectuals and educated workers (Diamand, Hudec, Wyslouch, Misiolek, Kozakiewicz) who founded sections in almost all the urban and industrial centers in Galicia. The socialist movement spread to Cieszyn Silesia which was also under Austrian occupation, where the opportunities for a workers' movement were excellent, because mining and industry were quite developed at that time. Although the western part of Cieszyn Silesia was in-

habited by a mixed Polish and Czech population, the labor movement succeeded in finding a common language and common leaders. The workers' organizations developed here perhaps more fully than anywhere else in Poland, and a strong trade union movement arose and several well-run co-operatives. Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia became the stronghold of the labor movement.

The Polish socialists were practically the only workers' party in Austrian-occupied Poland, where the party was not split as in the Congress Kingdom. The PPSD collaborated with democratic and progressive elements and won considerable influence among the small and landless Galician peasants.

In 1897 the Polish socialists for the first time entered the electoral struggle and won a number of parliamentary mandates. Previously the system of balloting (by curiae) made the election of a workers' representative impossible. But under the influence of the victory of the Belgian socialists, the Austrian Socialist Party launched a powerful campaign for universal franchise, and the Austrian government partly yielded by creating the so-called Fifth Curia, which comprised all the electors that had the right to vote in the other curiae in addition to the workers who could elect deputies only in the fifth. Ignacy Daszynski won the support of Adolf Gross, the leader of the Cracow democrats, and was elected despite unfavorable electoral conditions. The party also won mandates in a number of other localities. Thus, for the first time, the Polish Socialist Party entered parliament and won a place from which Daszynski spoke in the name of the entire Polish proletariat. Thanks to his extraordinary oratorical talents, Daszynski soon became famous throughout Europe as a workers' spokesman.

The party then began to acquire increasing strength, organized trade unions, established workers' centers, and founded workers' co-operatives. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was joined by young and progressive intellectuals such as Z. Zulawski, Z. Marek, Z. Klemensiewicz, E. Bobrowski, H. Liebermann, T. Reger, J. Moraczewski, E. Hecker, D. Gross, A. Hausner, almost all of whom later became deputies in the Austrian parliament or the Polish Diet and Senate, or occupied posts in the Polish government; they also played a prominent part in the labor movement.

As a result of intensive activities by the socialists, the position

of labor improved considerably; the working day was reduced, wages were raised, and voluntary health insurance was introduced. The Polish socialists were also very active in the field of self-government in Galicia, and had considerable influence in the municipal councils. In 1907 when Austria introduced the universal franchise under the pressure of the democrats and public opinion, the Galician socialists won a great victory and entered the Austrian parliament in large numbers. From that time on the Polish socialist movement in Galicia was a powerful political factor.

#### POLISH SOCIALISM UNDER GERMAN RULE

In German-occupied Poland, too, a workers' party arose. The conditions there were favorable, especially in industrial and mining Upper Silesia. But in Germany, there were no students' circles and groups of intellectuals, who have always acted as a leaven in the labor movement, for the German PPS lacked the élan of its Russian counterpart and the organizational mobility of the Galician party. The powerful German party and its trade unions drew many Polish workers away from the PPS, which had to wage a struggle in order to maintain itself as a separate unit within the German socialist movement, and often encountered resistance on the part of the German socialists. After Rosa Luxemburg arrived in Germany, the anti-independence ideology of the SDKPL began to take hold there. Nevertheless, the PPS in German-occupied Poland increased its influence, published its own organs, sent a representative to the Reichstag (T. Biniszkiewicz) and won sympathizers among leading German socialists (such as Bebel and Liebknecht). However, Rosa Luxemburg and others won an audience and the problem of independence became the key inter-organizational problem in the German and Polish parties. Although the PPS gained in strength and influence, increased its votes in the elections, and obtained "reinforcements" from the Russian and Austrian PPS, it never reached the position of its Russian and Austrian counterparts. Moreover, it was purely a workers' party, lacking the groups of intelligentsia which characterized the socialist movement in the Austrian and Russian-occupied parts of Poland. Only for a short time did intellectuals sit in its administrative and editorial offices.

THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE AGAINST TSARISM:  
1905

At the beginning of the twentieth century the PPS in Russian-occupied Poland entered a new romantic period, which will pass into the history of the struggles for liberation and the workers' rights. It was a period of intensified conspiratorial activity, which was carried on with extraordinary élan, and which a few years later was transformed into direct revolutionary action by organized militants ready for the supreme sacrifice.

The influence of the PPS now grew at a rapid tempo, while that of the SDKPL, which was in close contact with the Russian movement, developed also, although to a lesser extent. It gained considerable influence in some industrial regions, for instance, in the Dabrowski Basin.

The PPS organized mass demonstrations, and at the May 1st demonstration of 1900 gathered thirty thousand people in the streets of Warsaw, resulting in clashes with the Cossacks and infantry. The fact that an illegal group could organize such large scale demonstrations is an evidence of their scope and popularity.

The technique of the struggle influenced the organizational structure of the party. Its center now was a small vanguard of revolutionaries, leaders united in a secret conspiratorial group, flexible and operating with brilliance, composed of men prepared for anything. A revolutionary organization of this type could include only the most active individuals, yet its directives were carried out by the large masses through its numerous sympathizers among the workers and intellectuals. From the beginning of this century throughout the period of the revolution of 1905, we find in the militant organization of the PPS—the legendary “O.B. PPS”—people ready to die, waging an uncompromising struggle, just like the Russian revolutionaries. But their purpose was always to conquer independence for Poland and to create a democratic and socialist regime in the country thus freed.

Among the leaders and militants of that period one must mention the following: Montwill-Mirecki, who died on the gallows and became a legend; Stefan Okrzeja, a hero of 1905, who was also executed; Jozef Pilsudski, the future chief of state and Marshal; Aleksander Malinowski, one of the leaders of the 1905 revolution; Tomasz Arciszewski, one of the leaders of the fighting groups between 1900 and 1918, who after the German

invasion of Poland in 1939 again led the Polish underground, and came to London in 1944, as vice-president of the Polish Republic; Jozef Kwiatek, organizer of the mass demonstrations of 1905; Jan Kwapinski, who was sentenced to death, pardoned, and later became a deputy in the Diet, the president of the trade unions' association, the Mayor of Lodz, and finally the Vice-Premier of the Polish government in exile; Aleksander Prystor, later Polish Premier during the Pilsudski regime, and Feliks Perl, the theoretician of the socialist movement. All these names are linked with death sentences, years of imprisonment, romantic escapes, exiles to Siberia. Side by side with the Polish militants fought the militants of the *Bund*, Leckert and Szulman.

In addition to direct action, the party carried on widespread propaganda with the help of the *Robotnik* (The Worker), a newspaper of great popularity and influence. The Tsarist police for a long time were unable to discover the well-hidden printing plant of this publication. Numerous illegal pamphlets and magazines also arrived from abroad. In 1901 the 250th transport of printed materials sent from abroad passed the frontier, another proof of the resilience and excellent technique of the Polish organization. Not a single one of these transports was discovered by the Russian authorities, although the Russian revolutionaries were often caught while smuggling illegal literature.<sup>1</sup>

In 1900 the Russian police finally discovered the printing plant of the *Robotnik*, entirely by accident, and arrested Jozef Pilsudski, then editor and printer of the paper and member of the Central Committee. The events that followed again testify to the flexibility and resourcefulness of the movement. Pilsudski was freed from prison by a Polish prison doctor acting on the order of the party. The party organized also Aleksander Malinowski's escape as he was approaching the place of his deportation.

The number of illegal publications in Yiddish and Polish increased constantly, and they appeared in Warsaw, Lodz, Sosnowiec, Radom, and other places. A spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion inspired all the party members, who became increasingly sensitive to persecution and reacted violently to it, occasionally

<sup>1</sup> The Polish revolutionaries often displayed great ingenuity. In one instance, the channel through which underground literature was smuggled from Austria to Russian Poland was "underground" in the literal sense of the word. It was a tunnel, dug by Polish workers directed by Pawel Dannel, a mining technician, which connected two coal mines situated at opposite sides of the Austrian-Russian border.

murdering police informers. A sensation was created at that time by the attempt made on the life of Wahl, the governor of Wilno, by Hirszt Leckert, a member of the *Bund*, who thus retaliated for the governor's order to flog thirty-six participants in the May 1st demonstration. Leckert was court-martialed and executed.

In the fall of 1904 the revolutionary parties active on Russian territory held a conference in Paris for the purpose of coordinating their struggle against Tsarism. It was attended by delegates from the Russian Social Revolutionaries, the Russian constitutionalists gathered around the magazine *Osvobozhdenie*, the Finnish Party of Active Resistance, the Georgian Socialist Party, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. The Polish labor and revolutionary movement was represented by the PPS. The conference formulated a common minimum program, demanded abolition of the autocracy, the introduction of a free democratic regime and self-determination for all the people living within the Russian Empire.

This conference took place a few months after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and contributed to sharpening the revolutionary struggle. But the events themselves and the momentum of the revolutionary movement were even more significant.

The turning point in the tactics of the Polish revolutionary labor movement was the demonstration on Grzybowski Square in Warsaw in November, 1904, which the PPS organized in reply to the mobilization decree issued in connection with the Russo-Japanese War. On the appointed day, a Sunday, thousands of workers and intellectuals streamed into the square, and when the police arrived to stop the procession, a salvo was fired from the crowd, and a battle ensued. This demonstration, organized by Jozef Kwiatek, was the starting point of dozens of clashes and large workers' demonstrations held under the red flag of the PPS. As a result of the affair of November, 1904, the heroic socialist, Stefan Okrzeja, was executed on the slopes of the Warsaw citadel.

From that point on, the PPS followed the path of direct action, parallel to that of the Russian Social Revolutionaries.

Meanwhile the Russian revolution was smoldering. In January, 1905, the famous demonstration led by the priest Gapon ended in a blood bath. The PPS decided to exploit the revolutionary situation, and sought an understanding with the other

socialist groups, the *Bund* and the SDKPL. A general strike was called for January 27, 1905. In Warsaw alone, 35,000 workers answered the appeal; the strike spread to all the provinces and almost all the industrial centers. In addition to economic slogans and the demand for the eight-hour day, political slogans calling for the struggle against autocracy were put forward. Strikes, bloodily crushed demonstrations, attempts at assassination and fiery proclamations now marked the course of the struggle between the proletariat and Tsarism. In June, 1905, during a demonstration in Lodz, the Russian troops killed 500 workers and wounded 1,000. But despite the repression, the movement continued. On May 1, 1905, the illegal PPS printed and distributed 160,000 proclamations; 5,500 organized militants disrupted the administration of Russian-occupied Poland. During the period of severe struggle two Russian soldiers guarded every policeman against the revolutionaries, which testifies not only to the strength of the socialist fighting groups, but also to the popularity of their revolutionary action among the people at large.

When the revolutionary wave subsided and the period of reaction set in, the Militant Organization (O.B.) remained active, terrorizing the Russian officials and continuing the struggle with the active support of the working masses. The Russian government replied with numerous death sentences. But gallows and prisons did not stop the revolutionaries, who went to their death with great courage. As an example of their spirit we shall quote here the speech made before the Russian court-martial by Henry Baron, a nineteen-year-old socialist who was executed in the Warsaw citadel in 1907:

"I have openly admitted all the acts with which I was charged in the indictment in order to give to you judges the proof that a Polish revolutionary will face death without fear and throw his contempt in your faces. . . .

"I have made my admission also in order that your only allies, the informers and traitors, like Sankowski, may in vain stretch out their hands for their Judas rewards. I am a member of the fighting organization of the PPS, and I declare this with pride. And now I will tell you what induced me to join the ranks of this party.

"When as a little boy I began to attend the local school and experienced persecution and humiliation for the sole reason that I was a Polish child. I conceived a deep hatred for you because you had invaded and defiled my fatherland.



"And in my childish dreams I imagined that I would be the hero who would drive you out of here and rebuild the Polish state.

"But when I began to work I soon realized on whose wrongs the modern state of exploitation and violence is based. I learned that the working people were oppressed, I saw them toiling in their sweat. And I became convinced that there must be no hatred among nations, that one day they would all be free in their own free lands, and I realized that we were all brothers, and that the closest of my brothers was the Russian groaning under the same whip as we, whom you deliberately keep in darkness and stupidity and misery in order to make him an unconscious tool of your aims.

"And I turned my hatred and anger against you alone, hired servants. And when the general strike spread throughout Russia and Poland, when all the toiling life stopped on the vast expanses of the empire, I realized that the people were strong enough to throw off the double yoke of capital and national oppression, that they were strong enough to create a new life.

"Therefore I went to members of the PPS whom I knew and told them of my desire to join the fighting organization.

" 'Remember!' they warned me, 'remember what is in store for you: prison, torture and death!' I have accepted all these consequences. I joined the fighting organization, I killed men like you, acting on the orders of the fighting section, in accordance with the general principles of the party and its tactics.

"But do not imagine that we revolutionaries are greedy for blood and death. On the contrary, we value life, we want it to flow for everyone in happiness and light.

"But bloody necessity drove me on this path. Only if you are defeated in an armed clash, will you step out of the people's road to freedom.

"And the bloodier the battle, the greater your terror and defeat, the sooner will we reach our immediate aim, an independent democratic Polish republic.

"I know that I will hang on the gallows by your sentence. But you cannot hang my idea. This is not in your power. And the great proletarian idea will triumph.

"In the face of death I tell you that in not so many years you yourselves will sit on this bench as accused, to be judged by the victorious people. And nothing will save you from its anger. And its sentence will strike you and your Tsar. You will cease to exist and the people will go to your graves and spit on them."

The jubilee book published on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the PPS contains a long index, running into

many pages printed in small characters, of the names of the socialist fighters sentenced to hard labor or death by the Tsarist government.

The conditions of the struggle gradually became harder. The Russian government attempted to divert the masses by every means from the struggle waged by the PPS for Polish independence, political democracy and the workers' rights. Within Polish society there arose reactionary forces opposed to this struggle, above all the National Democratic Party which organized its own labor unions. Bloody clashes among the workers took place in Lodz.

By the time of the Balkan wars, the revolutionary movement in the Congress Kingdom subsided, but the Polish socialists realized that a world war was approaching and that it was bound to bring great changes in its train.

#### THE EVE OF THE WAR: CRACOW AS A REVOLUTIONARY CENTER

Polish and Russian revolutionaries settled in Cracow, taking advantage of the right of asylum and the constitutional order prevailing in Austria, as well as of Cracow's favorable position near the Russian border. In the cafés of Cracow at that time one could see Lenin engaged in heated discussions with Dzierzhinsky and Bukharin, as well as the leaders of the fighting organization of the PPS of Russian-occupied Poland and socialist militants from Austrian-occupied Poland. All of them pinned their hopes on the war and the imminent fall of Tsarism.

The leaders of the PPS supported the idea of creating Polish military societies in Galicia—and these later became the first troops of the Polish Republic. Jozef Pilsudski, formerly a leader of the fighting organization, concentrated himself exclusively on the *Strzelec*, a military organization which was the core of the Legions under his leadership. From that time on he began more and more to abandon the socialist movement and devote himself to military work. In the end he left the party and in 1926 passed over to the open fight against it.

#### 1914-1918: THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT IN LUBLIN

The war interrupted the normal political struggle in Austrian-occupied Poland. Battles were waged in the Carpathians and in Russian-occupied Poland, in which the Legions fought

on the side of Austria. But in 1917 the Polish troops revolted against the Central Powers, and the fighting organizations resumed their old traditions and began to act independently. An underground Polish Military Organization was formed, known as the POW (*Polska Organizacja Wajskowa*), which organized a whole underground army against the Central Powers, carried on sabotage activities and in 1918 played a decisive role. The PPS fighting groups began to struggle against the German occupants in the Congress Kingdom; they carried out a number of attempts on high German officials and gendarmerie officers, and published illegal newspapers. They turned against the Germans the same weapons they had used against Tsarism.

On November 7, 1918, after the German and Austrian collapse, the Polish socialist and radical populists and democrats proclaimed a people's republic in Lublin. The Lublin government headed by Ignacy Daszynski lasted for only a few days, but it inspired the masses of the people and it published a manifesto which will pass into history as a common document of the socialists, radical populists and democrats, as the program of a People's Poland. Here is the text of this manifesto:

"To the Polish People! Polish workers, peasants and soldiers! Over blood-drenched, tortured humanity rises the dawn of Peace and freedom. . . .

"By order of the people's (peasant) and socialist parties of the former Congress Kingdom and of Galicia we proclaim ourselves the Provisional People's Government of Poland and until the convening of the Constitutional Diet we take over complete and full authority, pledging ourselves to exercise it justly for the good and benefit of the Polish people and state, not shrinking, however, from severe and absolute punishment of those who will not recognize in Poland the authority of Polish democracy. As the Provisional Polish People's Government we decree and proclaim the following laws binding the whole Polish nation from the moment of issuance of the present decree:

"The Polish state, embracing all lands inhabited by the Polish people, with a sea coast of its own, is to constitute for all times a Polish People's Republic whose first President will be elected by the Constitutional Diet.

"The Constitutional Diet shall be convoked by us during the current year on the basis of general, equal, direct, secret and proportional suffrage for both sexes. Electoral regulations will be announced within the next few days. Every citizen who has

reached twenty-one years of age will have the right to vote or to be elected.

"From this day we proclaim in Poland full equality of political and civic rights for all citizens irrespective of origin, faith and nationality, freedom of conscience, press, speech, assembly, procession, association, trade-unionization and freedom to strike.

"All donations and majorats in Poland are hereby declared state property: Special prescriptions will be issued to counteract land speculation. All private as well as former government forests are declared state property; the sale and cutting of forests without special permission is prohibited from the time of the publication of the present decree.

"In industry, handicrafts and commerce we hereby introduce an eight-hour working day

"After we shall have finally constitutionalized ourselves we shall at once proceed to the reorganization of community councils, county assemblies and municipal local governments, as well as the organization in towns and villages of a people's militia which will insure to the population order and safety, obedience to and execution of the orders of our legislative organs, and the proper settling of the problems of food supply for the population.

"At the Constitutional Diet we shall propose the following social reforms:

"Forceful expropriation and abolition of big and medium landed property and its transfer to the working people under state supervision:

"Nationalization of mines, salt-mines, the oil industry, roads of communication and other branches of industry where this can be done at once;

"Protection of labor, unemployment, sickness and old age insurance;

"Confiscation of capital accumulated during the war through criminal speculation with articles of primary necessity and supplies for the army;

"Introduction of universal, obligatory and free lay school education.

"We call upon the Poles living in the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania to strive in brotherly harmony with the Lithuanian and White Ruthenian nations for the reconstruction of the Lithuanian state on its old historical boundaries, and upon the Poles in Eastern Galicia and in the Ukraine to settle peacefully all controversial questions with the Ukrainian nation until they are ultimately regulated by competent agents of both nations. . . .

"We consider it to be one of our most important and most urgent tasks to organize a regular people's army. We trust that the peasant and working youth will gladly join the ranks of the revolutionary Polish army, emanating from the people, defending the political and social rights of the working people, faithfully and completely devoted to the People's Government, subject only to its orders.

"Polish People! The hour of your action has struck. Take into your worn, powerful hands the great task of liberating your land which is soaked with the sweat and blood of your fathers and forefathers, and bequeath to subsequent generations a great and free and united homeland. Rise united to action, do not spare wealth or sacrifice of life for the great task of Poland's and the Polish worker's liberation.

"We call upon you brotherly Lithuanian, White Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Czech and Slovak nations to live in harmony with us and to support each other mutually in the great work of creating an association of free and equal nations.

"The Provisional People's Government  
of the Polish Republic

"Lublin-Cracow, November 7, 1918"

## THE FIRST YEARS OF POLISH INDEPENDENCE

The Lublin government fell and was replaced by a democratic government headed by the socialist, Jędrzej Moraczewski. But the socialists did not hold power for long. Two years later the storm of war approached and the Poles clashed with the Bolsheviks. The Polish socialists demanded that peace be concluded as soon as possible. But when the Russian troops approached Polish territory the socialists, faithful to their traditions, organized the workers for defense. The government was now headed by Wincenty Witos, a peasant leader, and Ignacy Daszyński, the socialist leader.

After the end of hostilities, the socialist deputies in the Diet prepared comprehensive social legislation. Social insurance—sickness, accident and unemployment insurance—formed its foundations. A network of hospitals, dispensaries and traveling health units was established throughout the country. In the self-administered health insurance organizations the socialists had an overwhelming majority almost everywhere, with the exception of certain localities in western Poland. Poland was one of the first countries to introduce the eight-hour working day by legislation, and laws protecting labor, especially female and

juvenile labor, were also passed. Paid vacations, regulation of dismissal procedure, labor inspectors who supervised the observance of the laws, labor courts, are among the concrete gains made by Polish labor, thanks chiefly to the socialist deputies in parliament (Cf. Chapter 4). At the same time, powerful trade union and educational organizations arose. The PPS and the organizations under its influence now occupied a decisive position among the masses.

#### OTHER POLITICAL GROUPINGS OF POLISH LABOR IN INDEPENDENT POLAND

The former SDKPL and a large part of the so-called PPS-Left founded the Polish Communist Party known in Poland as the KPP. The administration drove it underground, but it carried on its activities and even succeeded in obtaining a small representation in the Polish parliament. It won a fairly considerable influence in Lodz, the Dombrowa Basin and Warsaw. The KPP organized its cells in non-communist labor organizations, trying to extend its influence by that method, and fought the PPS in all organizational fields, while carrying on its fundamental activities in line with the communist program. The underground communist movement drew into its ranks many self-sacrificing individuals, but failed to achieve an influence comparable to that of the communist parties in Germany or France. The PPS preserved its dominant position which was based on its democratic character, its attachment to democratic institutions and the country's independence. There were often clashes between the socialists and the communists.

In 1937, the Communist International ordered the dissolution of the underground KPP. A number of Polish communist leaders who were in Russia or were summoned there by the Comintern were executed (among them, Zarski, Wojewodzki, De Nizeau, Dabal). Before the Second World War, although there were still communists in Poland, there was no organization officially recognized by the Comintern.

The Independent Socialist Party, politically more radical than the PPS, never gained any influence worth mentioning; in the end the two parties reached an agreement, and the independents entered the PPS.

To the right of the PPS, the National Labor Party (NPR) gained a certain following in the western provinces and in Lodz,

and, led by Popiel, advocated a moderate democratic political program during the last years of independent Poland.

The Catholic "Christian Democrats," a party which was born at the end of the nineteenth century, had a certain influence in the western provinces of Poland. Its ideological basis, which united various tendencies less co-ordinated before, was Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891. This party, which was not free of anti-Semitic tendencies, celebrated the anniversary of the encyclical as a holiday.

The influence of the Christian Democrats spread chiefly among the artisans and small traders and they sought an understanding with the parties of the Right, rather than with labor. Socially they advocated the "spreading" of property, the creation of independent workshops by the workers, and partnership between workers and employers. In Upper Silesia this party was led by Jan Korfanty, leader of the Silesian uprisings against the Germans. It had much influence and was more democratic there than in other parts of Poland. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War the National Worker's Party (NPR) and the Christian Democrats combined into one "Labor Party." This merger strengthened the democratic elements in the party, but it never gained much influence.

In eastern Poland there were also Socialist Byelorussian and Ukrainian parties; in Lodz and in Upper Silesia, the German socialist party was active.

The Ukrainian Social-Democracy founded by Dragomanov at first evolved toward communism, but later was reborn in a socialist form, especially in the eastern Galician oil basin, where considerable numbers of Ukrainian workers were employed.

The Jewish labor movement was concentrated chiefly in the *Bund*, which had a rich and militant tradition, and which was close to the PPS. Certain old misunderstandings were completely removed. The Jewish trade union joined the general association. Victor Alter and Henryk Ehrlich, executed in Russia in 1941, were among the prominent representatives of this Jewish group. The *Bund* also founded powerful educational and sports organizations and considerably influenced Jewish cultural life.

There was besides a Zionist-socialist movement, the *Poale-Zion*, which gained influence among the youth and certain labor circles. The differences between the *Bund* and *Poale-Zion* were cultural and political. Thus the *Bund* considered the Yiddish

language the national language of the Jews, supported Jewish culture based on this language, regarded Poland as the rightful native land of the Jews, and opposed emigration to Palestine and the conception of it as the Jewish national home. In contrast to the *Bund*, the *Poale-Zion*, while recognizing the importance of Yiddish considered Hebrew as the Jewish national language and Palestine the Jewish national home. Many members of this party emigrated to Palestine.

#### POLISH DEMOCRACY BETWEEN 1918 AND 1926

The following table of Polish deputies and senators according to parliamentary groups will give us a political picture of the Polish Republic during the period of its independence.

TABLE VII<sup>1</sup>  
DEPUTIES AND SENATORS ACCORDING TO PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS  
(1920, 1923, 1928 AND 1931)

<i>Parliamentary Groups</i>	<i>Jan. 20, 1920</i>	<i>Feb. 15, 1923</i>	<i>June 10, 1928</i>	<i>Mar. 1, 1931</i>
<b>Deputies</b>				
Total.....	395	444	444	444
Non-Party Bloc for Co-operation with the Government ..	..	..	122	247
Constitutional Work Party.....	18	..	..	..
Popular National Union.....	71	98	37	62
National People's Union.....	71	..	..	..
Christian National Group.....	..	28	..	..
Urban Union.....	13	..	..	..
Christian Democracy Parties.....	..	43	18	15
Polish Catholic People's Party.....	5	..	..	..
Peasant Deputies' Parliamentary Group.....	..	..	..	48
Polish Popular Party.....	108	70	..	..
"Piast" Peasant Party.....	..	..	21	..
"Wyzwolenie" Peasant Party.....	..	48	40	..
Peasant Party Group.....	..	..	26	..
Popular Party (Left Wing).....	11	..	..	..
Radical Peasants' Party.....	2	4	..	..
Peasant Union.....	..	..	3	..
National Christian Workmen's Group.....	29	..	..	..
National Workmen's Party.....	14	18	14	10
National Workmen's Party (Left Wing).....	..	..	5	..
Polish Socialist Parliamentary Union.....	35	41	63	24
Communist Deputies' Group.....	..	2	7	4
Peasants' Self-Help Party (Left Wing).....	..	..	..	1
Ukrainian Group.....	..	20	..	18
White-Ruthenian Group.....	..	11	..	..
Ukrainian and White-Ruthenian Group.....	..	..	30	..
German Parliamentary Group.....	2	16	19	5
Jewish Group.....	10	34	13	6
Others and Independent.....	6	11	26	4

<sup>1</sup> "Statistical Yearbook of Poland, 1932," Chief Office of Statistics, Warsaw, 1932



TABLE VII—*Continued*DEPUTIES AND SENATORS ACCORDING TO PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS  
(1920, 1923, 1928 AND 1931)

<i>Parliamentary Groups</i>	<i>Jan. 20, 1920</i>	<i>Feb. 15, 1923</i>	<i>June 10, 1928</i>	<i>Mar. 7, 1931</i>
<b>Senators</b>				
Total.....	..	111	111	111
Non-Party Bloc for Co-operation with the Government ..	..	..	46	74
Popular National Union.....	..	30	9	12
Christian National Group.....	..	9	..	..
Christian Democrats' Group.....	..	8	6	..
Nat'l Christian Workmen's Group and Christian Democrats.....	..	..	..	6
Peasant Senators' Parliamentary Group.....	..	..	..	6
Polish Popular Party.....	..	17	..	..
"Piaŝt" Polish Peasant Party.....	..	..	3	..
"Wyzwolenie" Polish Peasant Party.....	..	8	7	..
Peasant Party Group.....	..	..	3	..
National Workmen's Party.....	..	3	3	..
Polish Socialist Parliamentary Union.....	..	7	10	5
Ukrainian Group.....	..	6	12	4
White-Ruthenian Group.....	..	2	..	..
German Parliamentary Group.....	..	5	5	3
Jewish Group.....	..	12	6	..
Others and Independent.....	..	4	1	1

## EXPLANATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE POLISH DIET

Right/Popular National Union, National People's Union, Christian National Group./—1920—142; 1923—126; 1928—37; 1931—62.

Moderate Centrum/Constitutional Work Party, Urban Union, Christian Democracy Party, Polish Catholic People's Party,/National Christian Workmen's Group, National Workmen's Party/1919—79; 1923—61; 1928—37; 1930—49.

Peasant Parties/Right Wing—PIAST; Left Wing—Wyzwolenie, Peasant Party Group, Radical Peasants' Party/. 1919—121; 1923—122; 1928—90; 1931—48.

Socialists—1919—35; 1923—41; 1928—63; 1931—24.

Communists—1923—2; 1928—7; 1931—4.

Camp of Pilsudski—1928—122; 1931—247.

The last free elections to the Diet, on the basis of the old electoral law, took place in 1931, after the arrest of the opposition deputies and their deportation to Brzesc in an atmosphere of government repression. This explains the decline in the number of socialist and populist representatives. The elections of 1935 were boycotted by the leading Polish parties which opposed the government.

The Polish Diet and Senate had defects, just as the French parliament had; the parties were numerous and divided and *de facto* consolidation took place only in connection with the struggle for democracy in the 1930's. The Diet had difficulties in forming a majority, nor could it serve as a safety valve for the

rising political emotions, while much time was lost on debates and speeches that were not always purposeful. Nevertheless it was an uncorrupted institution and its debates were marked by deep sincerity. The Diet also voted the fundamental legislation which helped to integrate the three formerly separated regions of Poland, and became a free tribune and a school of democracy for Polish society as a whole. Fundamentally the Polish parliament was a sound institution, although both it and Polish administration needed reforms.

The PPS was the core of the Polish Left. Even the considerable number of socialist deputies elected in 1928—sixty-three—does not give a complete idea of the strength of this party, which was chiefly based on its role as a focus of all progressive and democratic elements. Until 1926 the political struggle in Poland was between these elements, represented by the PPS, the radical peasants and the progressive parties of the national minorities on the one hand, and the reactionary social and political elements led by the Nationalist Party in which the moderate elements gradually yielded to the extremists, on the other. In 1922 the struggle grew so sharp that reactionary students organized street demonstrations against the election of the liberal and progressive Gabriel Narutowicz as the first president of Poland, although his candidacy was supported by all the progressive parties and the PPS. The agitation against the president ended in tragedy: Narutowicz was shot to death by a fanatic. A year later, in 1923, there were again bloody incidents in Cracow, which were the expression of the growing political conflict between the Left and the Right.

In May, 1926, Pilsudski, with the support of the army, made a coup d'état, which was supported by the labor movement, including the communists, out of the fear of a Rightist coup d'état. Thus ended the first period in the history of the labor movement in independent Poland. There followed thirteen years of rule by Pilsudski and his successors.

#### THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1926 AND 1930

After the coup d'état, Pilsudski tried to win his old comrades of the PPS over to his side, but the labor movement, faithful to its democratic traditions, refused to collaborate with him, and as a result underwent a difficult crisis. Some of the leaders who fell under Pilsudski's personal spell and were closely connected with him during the period of terrorist action in 1905 and the

period of the Legions of 1914 joined the government camp. But the masses stayed with the PPS and the trade unions.

Broadly speaking, Polish society then was split between those who defended democratic institutions and the camp of the Pilsudskists. The criterion was the given group's attitude to the Diet and the democratic order. Often moderate elements, even conservatives, combined with radical elements for the defense of democratic institutions, while opposing these elements was the camp of Pilsudski, which stemmed from Polish socialism. As late as 1929 this camp still tried to maintain peaceful relations with the democratic parties and progressive intellectuals, and to show a progressive face itself as, for instance, when it appointed a Lwow progressive, Professor Jozef Bartel, as Premier. In the elections of 1928 the government still used the old progressive slogans, although "non-partisanship" was already advocated and the government bloc bore the strange name of the "non-partisan party" (Non-Partisan Bloc of Collaboration with the Government, abbreviated as BBWR). In 1929 important changes occurred within the government bloc and in the 1930's the so-called "group of colonels" came into power. But the government found no support among the masses, and was based only on the army, the bureaucracy and a section of the intellectuals. Its policy aimed at creating splits in the peasant and working class parties in order to find some social basis and weaken the opposition, but these efforts failed. In order to strengthen its own influence, the administration began to remove the representatives of the democratic movements from leading positions in self-governing municipalities. In the cities, commissioners replaced the elected presidents, and in the villages the authorities imposed mayors who were completely subservient to them. Even in the social insurance institutions built by the workers' organizations, the government eliminated democratically chosen officials, suspended self-administration, and installed its own commissioners. The parties of the opposition, especially the labor and peasant parties, began to be subjected to all kinds of administrative chicanery and very soon were actually persecuted, labor and peasant leaders filling the prisons. The worst blows fell on the parliamentary institutions in which, despite the efforts of the administration and the electoral terrorism, the democratic representatives won a considerable number of votes. Unable to find a common language with the peasants and workers, the ruling group sought an understanding

with the reactionaries. Colonel Slawek visited Prince Radziwill and won the support of the rich landowners gathered in the small conservative party, while heavy industry too, represented by the so-called *Leviatan*, supported the government. By dint of great efforts, government trade unions (ZZZ) were also created, and the workers in state enterprises were forced to join them. However, the government never succeeded in winning over the masses who remained attached to the democratic institutions.

Labor was led in this struggle for a parliament and for democracy by the veteran socialist, Daszynski, who became the spiritual leader of the democratic opposition.

#### LABOR STRUGGLES FOR DEMOCRACY: THE CONGRESS OF 1930

The fundamental freedoms of the people were threatened, and Poland now entered a period of severe political struggles between the authoritarian and democratic forces. Under these circumstances the labor and peasant parties called a congress in Cracow on June 29, 1930, which was attended by the PPS, the Populist Party representing the peasants, the moderate National Labor Party and certain sections of the Christian Democrats. Nearly thirty thousand workers and peasants gathered for the congress, which will figure in the history of Polish social struggles under the name of the "Centroleft Congress." The resolution adopted by this congress, which we quote here in full, is proof of the democratic aspirations of the Polish masses at that period.

The representatives of Polish democracy, assembled on June 29, 1930, at Cracow, declare the following:

##### WHEREAS:

Poland has been living for more than four years under the power of the actual dictatorship of Joseph Pilsudski; the will of the dictator is carried out by changing governments; the President of the Republic is subject to the will of the dictator; the nation's confidence in law in its own state has been undermined; the public life of the country is constantly fed by rumors and indications of new coups d'état; the people have been deprived of any influence whatsoever on the Republic's domestic and foreign policy. Since now, in consequence of the decree of the President of the Republic, the constitutional voice of the Diet has been silenced, as the President has neglected his duty and has neither carried out the demands of the National Rep-

resentation nor referred to the country by way of new honest elections—we, the representatives of Polish democracy assembled at Cracow,

ARE RESOLVED THAT:

(1) The struggle for the rights and freedom of the people is not only the struggle of the Diet and Senate, but the struggle of the nation;

(2) Without abolishing dictatorship it is impossible to get the economic depression under control or to solve the great domestic problems which Poland must solve on behalf of her future;

(3) The abolition of dictatorship is the indispensable condition of preserving the independence and assuring the integrity of the Republic; democracy means peace.

WE DECLARE:

(1) That the struggle for the abolition of Joseph Pilsudski's dictatorship has been undertaken jointly by all of us and will be continued jointly until victory; (2) that only a government possessing the confidence of the Diet and of the nation will meet with our determined support and the assistance of all our forces; (3) that any attempt at a coup d'état intended to abolish the still existing liberties will be met with determined resistance; (4) that in relation to the government in power by the coup, the nation will be free from any duties, and the obligations of the illegal government towards foreign countries will not be recognized by the Republic; (5) that every attempt at terrorism will be met by physical force. We further declare that since the President of the Republic, unmindful of his oath, has openly taken his stand with the dictatorship that rules Poland against the will of the country, and allows the government of Mr. Slawek to abuse the constitutional rights of the Head of the State for the government's current political aims—Ignacy Moscicki should resign from the office of President of the Republic.

The Convention states that it is the will of the broad masses of the Polish people to maintain peaceful relations with all neighbors and to co-operate actively in the preservation of the peace of the world. The Convention states that any action aiming to change the boundaries of the Republic will meet with the determined resistance of Polish democracy which warns world democracy against any new attempts on the part of imperialists who provoke international conflicts.

Long live the Independent Polish People's Republic! Down with dictatorship! Long live the Government of the Workers' and Peasants' Confidence.

A few months later the peasant and labor leaders, especially those of the PPS and the Populist (Peasant) Party, were arrested because of their activities at this congress and transported to the prison at Brest-Litovsk. Among the workers' deputies, the authorities arrested Hermann Liebermann, prominent parliamentarian, labor and socialist leader; Adam Pragier, prominent socialist deputy; Norbert Barlicki, PPS deputy, Minister in the first people's government and Adam Ciolkosz and Stanislaw Dubois, prominent leaders of labor and the youth, and other PPS deputies. Among the arrested populists were a number of peasant deputies, including Wincenty Witos, leader of the Polish peasants, former Premier and deputy for many years, Baginski and Kiernik, peasant deputies, and Korfanty, of the Christian-Democratic Party, a deputy and leader of the Silesian uprising who enjoyed great influence in Upper Silesia.

The government, unwilling to apply completely dictatorial methods and to eliminate the party system altogether, hoped to frighten the leaders of the democratic parties into submission. But Brest-Litovsk aroused not only the workers' circles; even Rightist intellectuals and moderate democrats expressed their indignation, and we should take special note of the protest of the professors of the University of Cracow, the oldest in Poland. However, the masses of workers were exhausted by the protracted struggle, and the economic crises made it impossible to organize political strikes, which are a fundamental weapon under such circumstances.

#### THE WAVE OF RESISTANCE BETWEEN 1930 AND 1939

The masses of the peasants were the first to go into action and after the depression the dynamism of the working class increased also. The Polish peasants are not easy to arouse, but once a movement starts among them it is difficult to stop the avalanche. Peasant strikes took the form of stoppage of food deliveries to the cities; they broke out sporadically after 1930, and in the end were transformed into a wave that swept all of western Galicia, where democratic traditions were the oldest, the population was most strongly attached to its parties and was politically mature. It is important to note that these peasants' strikes had a predominantly political character, and the peasants demanded the restoration of democratic institutions. Meanwhile the improving economic situation made it possible to call workers' strikes, which gradually became more numerous; 312 strikes were re-

corded in 1930, in 1931 their numbers increased to 357, in 1932 to 504, in 1933 to 631, in 1934 to 946, and in 1935 to 1165, in 1936 to 2,056, and in 1937 they reached the figure of 2,078. The economic demands at that time were closely connected with political demands, and although these strikes had chiefly an economic character, they were an important factor in the struggle for democracy. The character of the strikes underwent a change, and for the first time the so-called "sit-down" strike made its appearance among the miners. It was announced that one of the mines was to be flooded by its owners, either because it was unprofitable or as a result of an agreement among the mining companies, so one day after work the miners refused to leave, and remained in the shafts, only sending out a few comrades to bring them food. The conflict assumed a tragic character, with the miners remaining underground in the half-flooded mine for several weeks. These miners defending the mines became an object of general sympathy and admiration, and struck a powerful chord of response among the workers, and this technique of sit-down strikes was applied more and more frequently.

The sit-down strike is a weapon completely different from the ordinary strike. The striking workers stay in the factories or mines for several weeks, and a special feeling of solidarity develops among them. The large masses of organized workers are drawn into the struggle, and the slogan of aid to the workers who are occupying their factories and fighting for higher wages finds wide response. But the psychological aspect of the situation is important, too; lacking elementary comforts and freedom of movement, the workers display increased devotion to their cause, tenacity, militancy, and uncompromising spirit and, above all, a high degree of irritability. Thus the psychological reaction is much more violent than during an ordinary work stoppage, and it spreads much faster and further. Workers belonging to other unions visit the strikers and gather in front of the factories involved, while the strikers mark their defiance by hoisting red flags and covering the factory chimneys and gates with militant slogans. During the great wave of strikes in 1935 in the industrial centers of western Galicia, the red flags flying on numerous factory buildings impressed the population as a whole, not only the workers, and the strikers themselves knew that outside the factory walls their cause had found wide support. The economic slogans soon became linked up with general

political slogans, which had a greater impact because of their ideological content.

The strike in the Cracow factory "Semperit" in 1936 was a turning point, and as a result of the brutality of the police was transformed into a mass demonstration and revolt. The sit-down strikers in that factory were driven out by the police during the night in their underwear, whereupon the workers of the town gathered spontaneously in the Workers' Home and, on leaving the building, had a bloody clash with the police. The demonstration assumed a general character and spread rapidly.

The peasants, too, fought actively for democracy, and in August, 1937, when the peasant strike in Galicia reached its climax, they appealed for aid to the Cracow workers' council. Twelve hours later all the industrial establishments in Cracow stopped work, and the solidarity between workers and peasants was thus dramatically demonstrated in that region. The economic slogans were pushed into the background; the political demand for the restoration of democracy came to the fore.

The democratic forces were growing, the government peasant organizations were growing weaker and the government trade unions, organized with great difficulty, lost their membership. The PPS and the Polish trade unions were now led by a group of resolute people who had passed the test of action in the course of long years of struggle. Among them were Zygmunt Zulawski, vice-chairman of the Diet and general secretary of the trade unions; Kazimierz Puzak, Secretary of the Central Committee (CKW); H. Liebermann and H. Diamand, prominent leaders and members of the sect; Kazimierz Czapinski, deputy in the Diet, chairman of the workers' educational organizations (he died in a concentration camp during this war); Mieczyslaw Niedzialkowski, editor of the central organ of the PPS, deputy in the Diet (later shot by the Germans); Jan Kwapinski, president of the trade unions, deputy in the Diet; Jan Stanczyk, leader of the miners; Zygmunt Zaremba; Norbert Barlicki; Adam Prochnik, journalist and deputy; and the deputies Adam Ciolkosz and Stanislaw Dubois (who died in a concentration camp); Romuald Szumski, Rusinek, Skalak, Ziolkiewicz, Adamczyk, Yanta and many others.

Meanwhile the new political and social situation in Europe and Poland required a new formulation of the Socialist program. At the Congress of Radom (1936) the PPS adopted a new program, the so-called "Radom Program," which answered the



requirements of the situation. Yet it was a continuation of the old line of Polish socialism, a reaffirmation of its loyalty to the ideals of democracy and freedom.

The social fronts in the struggle grew more and more distinct. The government created a new political organization: the Camp of National Union (abbreviated as OZN and popularly called OZON), which was a party of reactionary anti-Semitic and fascist tendencies, with youth organizations attached to it which were openly fascist. During the last years before the outbreak of the Second World War, the fascist and anti-Semitic movement among the nationalist students grew considerably. It was modeled on the Italian fascist and Nazi ideologies (the National Radical Organization, abbreviated as ONR, the Falange and the youth section of the OZN) and was often quietly supported by the government. As a result of their agitation violent anti-Semitic excesses took place in Poland, which were condemned and actively opposed by the democratic movement. The people's forces consisted in the labor movement led by the PPS, the trade unions strengthened by the recent strikes, and the peasant masses led by the peasant parties combined in the Polish Peasant Party. Both sides made ready to mount the barricades.

In April, 1935, the government imposed a new constitution which deprived the opposition of all possibility of parliamentary struggle. The direct ballot became a fiction, and all the parties of the opposition, from the Rightist nationalists to the PPS and the populists, boycotted the elections.

The elections to the municipalities from November, 1938, to the spring of 1939 were intended to provide a safety valve for the opposition, which did not cease its struggle for the restoration of democracy. The people's movement was now strengthened by the support of small but influential groups of democratic intellectuals. In many localities, the workers, led by the PPS and the trade unions were victorious in the municipal elections, and it was clear that the socialists controlled Polish labor. The socialist Jan Kwapinski was elected mayor of the biggest industrial center in Poland, Lodz, but despite these victories, the air remained charged with conflict.

At that time there arose the Democratic Clubs of radical intellectuals, led by Professor Michalowicz. Other more moderate democratic cells were also formed, which were not very numerous, but were influential because they included promi-

nent Polish intellectuals. The spiritual leaders of this group were Ignace Paderewski and ex-Premier Wladyslaw Sikorski. Through Stanislaw Kot, later Polish Ambassador to Russia, and Minister in the Polish government in exile, this group was connected with the peasant movement. There was also underground agitation against the government and the foreign policy of Colonel Beck, and radical democratic elements published illegal pamphlets against him. Both the labor and peasant movement fought uncompromisingly against the government's foreign policy in meetings and in the press. The PPS which supported all the anti-fascist movements warned that fascism would result in war. The Spanish Republic and its struggle against fascism won deep sympathy among the Polish workers, and in the press and at meetings, the cause of the Spanish Republic was passionately defended, while the socialist organizations and trade unions collected funds for the Republicans and sent them foodstuffs. Numerous Polish workers, particularly miners, smuggled themselves through the Carpathians to join the Polish brigade in the Spanish Republican army, which also included many Polish workers from France. This brigade, named after Dombrowski, the Polish general who fought on the side of the Paris Commune, displayed great heroism during the Spanish Civil War. The Polish socialists were also resolutely opposed to the pact of Munich and at numerous meetings the Polish workers expressed their sympathy for Czechoslovakia.

The further development of this struggle was interrupted by the German invasion of Poland. In the face of the national danger all antagonisms were put aside and the whole population united for the struggle against the Nazis. The old song of the PPS in 1905 resounded in the streets of Warsaw:

"Forward, Warsaw, to the bloody struggle,  
Sacred and just, forward Warsaw!"

And during the heroic defense of Warsaw against the German besiegers, workers' delegates, members of the PPS, side by side with their former adversary Mayor Starzynski, led the Polish fighters. Mieczyslaw Niedzialkowski, the leader of the Warsaw workers, and Mayor Starzynski, member of the government party, gave their lives for the same cause—they were both executed by the barbarian invaders. When the German emissaries asked Niedzialkowski to sign the act of capitulation, he

answered briefly: "I shall not sign, a Polish worker never capitulates."

With the occupation of Poland, a new chapter in the war began. The Poles took the old path of insurrection, resuming their old tradition of heroic and uncompromising struggle; the tradition of the revolutionary underground.

---

## Trade Unions and Co-operatives

---

### TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The history and character of the Polish trade union movement were different in each of the three parts of Poland.

The cradle of the movement was Galicia formerly occupied by Austria, where it could be organized legally. In the part of Poland occupied by Germany, the German trade unions absorbed the organized Silesian workers. It was in the Congress Kingdom that the Polish labor movement acquired its extraordinary dynamism, but was unable to create a trade union movement in the European sense of the word, because it had to work illegally.

In Galicia the trade union movement started in the 1870's, when there were already trade union periodicals (of the printers' union). The movement there had many features of the old corporations: for instance, the printers' union preserved several survivals of artisan customs, some deriving from medieval days, such as the wandering apprentices; another feature, more significant than the old-fashioned customs, was the closed character of this union. Socialism contributed considerably to the development of the trade union movement; at the beginning of the twentieth century there were in Galicia powerful trade organizations of a purely labor character—unions of miners, railroadmen and municipal workers—which became the mainstay of the socialist movement. At the Congress of Przemyśl in 1902 the whole Galician trade union movement was unified, and a general Galician movement came into being which was connected with the Austrian movement.

In Russian-occupied Poland, because of the illegal conditions, the political movement could not be separated from the economic movement, and the political underground carried on the economic struggle. The system of a political vanguard, which is based on a small group of active militants and a mass of unorg-

ganized sympathizers, is not suitable for the organization of trade unions, in which the organization of the masses is essential. Nevertheless, in the 1900's the foundations of illegal trade unions were laid even in Russian-occupied Poland. Local unions and central bodies, as well as trade union organs, were founded.

In 1918, after the achievement of independence, various locals of the trade unions in the formerly separated regions were combined, and a powerful class trade union movement influenced by the PPS was born.

In addition to the trade unions directed by the Central Committee of Trade Unions, there were also the so-called "yellow" unions belonging to the "Christian Trade Unions," the "Polish Trade Unions" (especially in the western provinces) and a number of smaller organizations, including the strong trade unions of the intellectual workers. In the 1930's the number of registered members of all these organizations fluctuated between 900,000 and 950,000, while in 1934 it was 945,000.<sup>1</sup>

According to recent corrected data published in the February 1, 1944, issue of *Robotnik Polski* (The Polish Worker in Great Britain), vol. 5, no. 3, the actual membership figures at the outbreak of the war were as follows:

Total union membership in Poland (including	
Jewish unions with a membership approaching	
100,000) . . . . .	1.6 million
Polish Trade Union Congress . . . . .	0.6 million
Sympathizing federations of manual workers . . . . .	0.3 million
Sympathizing federations of white-collar and pro-	
fessional workers . . . . .	0.3 million
Christian Trade Union and related groups . . . . .	0.4 million

The labor unions had considerable organizational strength, and the efforts made by Pilsudski's government after 1926 to split the movement failed. For some time, however, the government "union of trade unions" (ZZZ) gained members in the numerous government-owned enterprises. But the ZZZ completely lost its influence when the depression subsided and strikes began to sweep the country. The workers were always attached to their own trade unions.

The trade union federation was organized on an industrial basis: all the workers of a given industrial branch belonged to one trade union, whatever their occupation. Thus all the

<sup>1</sup> "Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, September, 1939—June, 1941," Polish Ministry of Information, London.

workers in the flour mills, the mechanics, the millers, the stokers, and the porters, belonged to the same food workers' union, which protected the interests of all the workers in a given enterprise and not those of a privileged caste of skilled or organized workers. This fact gave the unions a broad basis and enabled them to undertake both economic and political campaigns.

The trade unions, with a few exceptions, were not closed institutions, and it was not difficult to join them; on the contrary, all the efforts of their leaders were directed towards drawing into them the widest possible working masses. In the end even the unemployed, who in pre-war Europe formed a class apart, were organized into unions. These latter unions aimed at including the whole of the working class in their organizational framework and at defending the interests of the widest masses. They are a proof of the farsightedness of the trade union movement, which instead of excluding the unemployed from the community of workers, extended its leadership to these dynamic and, as the German experience teaches us, wavering elements, which in a crisis can easily weigh the scales of victory to the side of fascism.

The dues were relatively low, nor were there any substantial initiation fees, which helped to give the Polish trade union movement a progressive and democratic character.

Naturally there were exceptions, but they were few in number. Among them, there was the already mentioned printers' union, which was a closed union of a guild character; it limited the number of printers, made admission to the trade difficult and regulated the labor market by these methods. It also obtained high wages for its members compared to other Polish workers, created excellent self-help organizations, and paid high relief allowances to the unemployed printers. The printers thus became a typical labor aristocracy and had a higher living standard than other workers, and for a long time they held leading positions in the political and educational movement. Many prominent socialist leaders came from their ranks, and a relatively large number of them sat in parliament. A few other unions had similar guild character, such as the tilers, an almost completely closed union which obtained very high wages for its members.

The individual unions were organized into "centers," which led the organizations of a given industry throughout Poland. A Central Committee headed all the unions belonging to the

federation, and in this way the whole movement was co-ordinated.

Although the trade unions often stressed their non-partisan character, one must not therefore conclude that they were apolitical. They admitted all workers without regard to their political affiliation, but they occupied a class position in the struggle for the improvement of the lot of the working masses, for social justice and for democracy. Workers of various political shades belonged to the unions, but the PPS exerted a decisive influence on these organizations, and their adherents constituted the overwhelming majority of the members. Not the party, but the trade unions constituted the really organized labor mass in Poland; the party had the character of a vanguard and supplied the political direction for the masses organized in trade unions, while the leaders of the trade union movement, Kwapinski, Zulawski, Zdanowski, Stanczyk and Mastek, were also members of the PPS and represented that party in parliament.

The Polish trade union federation collaborated with the international labor movement; the particular trade organizations belonged to their respective internationals, and the movement as a whole worked with the Socialist Labor International whose headquarters before the war was in Amsterdam.

Within the framework of the Central Committee there were formed a number of powerful trade organizations, each comprising several tens of thousands of members. Among these large unions were the railroadmen, miners, chemical workers, metal, textile, and municipal workers.

The railroads in Poland belonged to the state, and the railroadmen's union (abbreviated as ZZK) had a special character. It developed a flexible organizational network, and succeeded in obtaining relatively favorable economic conditions for its members, besides developing activity in other fields, as for instance workers' education. Numerous clubs were opened in the houses of the railroad brotherhood all over Poland, with libraries and courses of lectures which were attended by employees and former employees. In these clubs they found newspapers, entertainment, radios. The railroadmen's orchestras won nation-wide fame, and the Atheneum Theater in the railroadmen's building in Warsaw soon became one of the leading theaters in Poland. For some time the union also ran its own secondary boarding schools; its publishing house printed not

only trade union material, but began the publication of serious works on social science, and it had a number of sanatoria in the mountains and at the seashore, where the members enjoyed vacations at really reasonable prices. These rest homes had a high cultural level, and offered comforts which would have been inaccessible to the railroadmen at the prices prevalent in private institutions of a similar kind.

This well organized and integrated union was influenced by the PPS, and the members of the railroad brotherhood throughout the country were for a long time the most active members of the party.

The large and well organized miners' union (abbreviated as CZG) incorporated both the miners working in the government salt mines and the coal and oil miners. Thanks to the collective agreements, this union obtained favorable wages and working conditions for its members, especially in the oil wells, the Silesian coal mines and the salt mines, whose workers had pensions. The construction workers' union was less numerous, but played an important role during political struggles. The agricultural workers had a special tradition in Poland, and the PPS had long supported their struggle for improved conditions.

The struggle for higher wages is more difficult in the countryside than anywhere else. The landowners are usually conservative, traditionalistic, patriarchal; their income comes chiefly from yearly crops with a slow turnover in contrast to the rapid turnover of industrial production, and consequently they are slow to grant concessions. Nor do they understand the people's ever-increasing needs and aspirations, for they live according to the maxim that one often heard in Poland: "In my father's time it was like this, and the people were happy, and everything was fine."

Organization of the agricultural workers was not easy, because of the isolation and the lack of good communications. Moreover, the agricultural workers' unions had difficulties in controlling their organizers in the field and in finding appropriate instructors. Nevertheless, the trade union movement embraced a large number of agricultural laborers, and the annual struggle for collective agreements was a clear sign of their activity. The *formals* worked on the basis of collective agreements between the unions and the landowners' representative.

An agricultural strike is a strike of hired laborers working for a landowner and consists of a work stoppage; it should be di-



tinguished from a peasant strike, which is a strike of independent producers who stop delivering foodstuffs to the cities. The agricultural strike aims at improving the hired laborers' existence and is directed against the landowners, while the peasant strike is directed against the government authorities and aims at a change in the political situation or in the government's economic policies. It is fought for such aims as the restoration of democracy or agrarian reforms.

Such agricultural strikes were rarer than industrial strikes because of the difficulties mentioned above. To be effective, they must be organized over vast regions, for isolated strikes were easily crushed with the help of the unenlightened peasants, although when they did occur they were as stubborn as the peasants' character itself, and had a tendency to spread. Such strikes took place in eastern Galicia in 1902.

At that time the masses of Ukrainian and Polish agricultural laborers were fighting for the improvement of their living standards, and the strike was supported by the Polish and Ukrainian socialist movements. In the 1920's a wave of agricultural strikes again swept all Poland, and was directed by the agricultural workers' union. It created a real panic among the landowners and the union won an advantageous collective agreement. A few years later this wave mounted once more in the eastern provinces.

#### THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

After the restoration of independent Poland, the workers displayed much initiative in forming co-operatives such as the *Proletariat* co-operatives in Cracow. Many of these efforts failed, but some trade union organizations (the railroadmen, for instance) succeeded in creating their own network of co-operatives.

The trade union federation and the PPS fully supported the co-operative movement. The labor organizations belonged to the general co-operative union called "Spolem" in which they had a strong representation and influence, although it was not exclusively a labor enterprise, and a number of the sections of "Spolem" were administered by trade union members. In the very recent past the co-operative movement gained considerable strength in Poland.

In addition to food co-operatives, the labor movement displayed much vitality in housing co-operatives, among which the

Warsaw Housing Co-operative particularly distinguished itself. It built a model settlement at Zoliborz which became a socialist center, while co-operative apartment houses were also built in other cities. Although these co-operatives were a remarkable local achievement, they did not manage to solve the housing question in Poland or even in individual cities.

Despite the modesty of its results, however, the co-operative movement in Poland had a well developed theory and ideology. The works of the theoreticians Edward Abramowski and Romuald Mielczarski are a basis for the future development of these important institutions.

#### EDUCATION, SPORTS

In Russian- and German-occupied Poland the governments pursued a policy of de-Polonization, and as a result of this, Polish education in these regions labored under great difficulties. In some instances Polish schools and Polish culture were forbidden completely, and the Poles had practically no opportunity to study in their own language.

The situation was different in the Austrian-occupied part of Poland. Here there was a complete system of schools, from elementary schools to universities. Galicia was the center of living Polish culture, with its two universities (Cracow and Lwow), the Academy of Arts and Sciences and numerous Polish museums and collections. The universities devoted special attention to Polish literature and history with Polish as the language of instruction.

The young people of the Congress Kingdom were deprived of the chance of higher education, which developed so magnificently all over the world in the last half of the nineteenth century, although its function was to some extent replaced by adult education. After the crushing of the 1863 uprising, positivist slogans triumphed in Polish society, and the positivists stressed education as next in importance to economic development, while in the following decades the cause of Polish education and culture occupied a prominent place in the social activities of various groups. Lectures, often delivered at secret gatherings forbidden by the authorities, replaced the university of the Polish youth at the turn of the last century. These young people were idealistic; they could not hope for diplomas or careers as a reward for their studies, and the very fact that they attended such lectures often involved them in grave danger. In the end,

the so-called Flying Universities arose, which changed the place of their meetings daily in order to hide from the police.

The schools for adults in that period played a much greater part in Poland than in other countries which enjoyed full freedom of education and scientific research. This system produced in Poland not only a number of devoted educational and social leaders, but also many prominent scientists, who often went abroad to continue studying the sciences first learned in secret Polish schools. Madame Curie-Sklodowska was one of them.

However, a workers' educational movement could not arise under Russian occupation at that period. All the energy of the workers was directed to the revolutionary struggle; education was only a side-issue, although it was an integral part of socialist agitation. Mass education requires mass activity, and this was incompatible with the vanguard technique of the revolutionary struggle. For that reason, the actual beginnings of the future workers' educational movement occurred in Galicia, where the democratic constitution afforded the possibility of open activity and where the political struggle was not revolutionary in character. At the end of the nineteenth century the People's University Association (popularly called the UL) was founded in Cracow. This was the cradle of Polish adult education and the germ of the future working class educational movement; it founded a number of branches, and the best progressive elements in Galicia of that day, scientists, university professors, writers and journalists, collaborated with it and traveled through the provinces giving lectures. There was also the People's School Association (TSL), which was active in the villages and created a network of schools, libraries, etc. The UL was particularly active among the working classes, and soon became a center of adult education similar in some respects to such western organizations as the English Workers' Educational Association. In the pre-war period it carried on an extremely lively program, and its lectures, courses, libraries and excursions played an important role in the workers' movement. The most prominent contemporary Poles collaborated in the university which gained the confidence of the masses.

During the first years of Polish independence the Workers' University Association (TUR), based on the trade unions and the PPS, came into existence, and in its foundation the tradition of the People's University of Cracow played a great role, for the initiative for it came from the leaders of the Cracow organiza-

tion. The methods of work had been elaborated by the UL during its long existence, and consisted chiefly of lecture courses and self-teaching circles, excursions, visits to museums, libraries and reading rooms. The basic element was the single lecture, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon system based on continuous work in classes, which here were replaced by the traditional Polish system of self-teaching circles. The TUR also carried on cultural activities. The workers' theaters, some of them of a very high artistic quality (as in Lodz), the choirs and orchestras aimed at raising the cultural level of the Polish working class. To make cultural entertainment accessible to the workers the TUR hired theaters and sold tickets through trade unions and factories, thus attracting the workers to the theater and bringing them closer to the arts.

In the years preceding the German invasion the educational work of the TUR, despite many difficulties, began to take new directions. The workers' movement improved its methods. Experimental work was begun in Cracow on the possibilities of preserving spontaneous workers' elements in education and on the separation of two fundamental aspects: the acquiring of knowledge on the one hand, and developing the ability to think and draw independent conclusions on the other. This method aimed at preserving the worker's ability independently to weigh and reject various political and economic systems—a most important ability for his democratic education. The center of these experiments was the School of Social Sciences of the TUR, founded in Cracow in 1934 when the workers' organizations were being persecuted. In the beginning this school comprised a few dozen workers; in the last years their number rose to 180 a year and despite the unfavorable conditions it persisted in its work till the very end. The program of the school included conventional instruction in such subjects as labor legislation, social sciences, etc., thus supplying a fund of knowledge, and seminars in which the participants received independent research assignments that had to be carried out without resorting to books. The subjects of these assignments were usually descriptions of the workers' milieu (family, factory, relations between city and country), and the discussions connected with them were based exclusively on the students' own observations and views. Later this method was extended by the organization of contests for "Workers' Memoirs," which were published under the title "Workers Write" (edited by Z. Myslakowski and the

author). By that time summer schools had also been introduced. The trade unions sent their most gifted members to these schools and gave them scholarships, and several of the graduates occupied prominent posts after the municipal elections in which the working class was victorious. In the last years before the war the TUR, together with a number of other social institutions, participated in the organization of workers' vacations, through which a large number of the relatively better paid workers were enabled to spend their vacations in the country, the mountains or at the seashore.

In the 1920's a strong youth movement developed within the framework of the TUR, its educational and boy scout organizations. The Workers' Society of the Friends of Children (RTPD) organized vacation camps for workers' children. There were also other societies of this kind in Poland.

Needless to say the TUR was not the only educational organization active among the workers. Similar activities were developed by public and municipal institutions, and by a number of other organizations, some of them founded with the express purpose of competing with the TUR. Several of these institutions did useful work. But the TUR was the only organization that carried on educational activities for the specific purposes of serving the labor movement, for its form was based on the mass trade union and the political party. The TUR was matched in the countryside by the People's Universities organized by the populists and based on the powerful peasant movement.

The sports' movement among the workers began to develop in Poland only in the 1920's. With the help of the TUR, the trade unions and the PPS, workers' sports clubs were founded and unified in the federation of workers' sports unions. This federation had a certain influence on the labor youth and was organized according to club, and not mass, principles; the tremendous popularity of football (soccer) made it difficult to develop these clubs on a mass basis. In this respect there was a fundamental difference between working class sports in Poland and in Czechoslovakia or Austria, where the sports organizations had a really mass character. In Poland the workers' sports clubs were essentially the same as the middle-class sports clubs, and factories frequently organized their own sports clubs, which competed with the workers' sports organizations.

To complete the picture, it must be noted that in Poland the sports movement had a different character from that in most

western countries. The youth had no financial difficulty in practicing sports because there was considerable public assistance, numerous centers of physical education, and the popular club type of sports was very inexpensive. Moreover, the workers' clubs were not the only centers of popular sports.

---

## Polish Workers Abroad

---

The Polish peasants and workers began to emigrate long ago, to North America, South America, Germany, France, Russia and other countries.

The emigration to America has a long history. As early as the seventeenth century, the chronicles of Virginia mention the struggle of the Polish pitch, tar and soap-ash workers (probably not wage-earners) for equal political rights with the English. The first parliament in America, the House of Burgesses, met in Jamestown, but only the English had the right to vote. The Poles objected to this and went on strike, and the incident is described in the Court Book of the Virginia Company of London, under the date of July 13, 1619:

"Upon some dispute of the Polonians resident in Virginia it was now agreed that they shall be enfranchised and made as free as any inhabitant there whatsoever. And because their skill in making pitch and tar and soap-ashes shall not die with them it is agreed that some young men shall be put unto them to learn their skill and knowledge therein—for the benefit of the country hereafter. . . ."

Large-scale emigration began, however, only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and reached a particularly high level in the first decade of this century. Some of the Poles who settled on farms eventually went to work in mines, steel mills, canned food factories and the clothing industry, and today we find large numbers of Polish workers in New York, New Jersey, New England, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and other states. The Polish workers joined the unions and their influence in the AFL and CIO has recently been very marked. Many Polish workers can be found among the CIO members in the Pennsylvania mines and the Detroit steel mills, and a very high per-

centage of the New York tailors are Polish Jews. The American workers of Polish origin have produced a number of gifted leaders. There is, for instance, David Dubinsky, the president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, who was born in Poland, and who in 1911 fled from Siberia, where he had been deported for illegal socialist activities, and came to the United States. Another prominent Polish labor leader is Leo Krzycki of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, CIO. A worker's son, he distinguished himself as a socialist leader in Milwaukee in the first decade of this century, was elected alderman in Milwaukee, working together with his contemporaries Debs and Hillquit, and in the end assumed a leading position in the American Socialist Party. The famous B. Charney Vladek, a Polish Jew from the Minsk region, was a prominent labor leader and a city councilman in New York. In his early youth he joined the Jewish Socialist Party (*Bund*) and came to the United States in 1908, where his constructive work in the New York city administration and among the workers earned him general respect. He died in 1938, and to his last days maintained close contact with Poland, particularly with the Jewish Socialist Party. Many more names of prominent Polish labor leaders in America could be mentioned.

What is the attitude of these workers toward Poland? They are an integral part of the American labor movement—they are, above all, Americans. By their culture, living standards and habits, they are American workers, and in this integration with American life the unions play a considerable part thanks to their universally American character. They are connected with Poland only by a natural thread of interest and sympathy.

Polish socialists, too, emigrated to the United States and in the free conditions of this country created their own organizations, while maintaining close contact with Poland. One group is the Union of Polish Socialists, which since 1893 has been publishing its own weekly *Robotnik Polski* (The Polish Worker) (at present edited by S. Kaminski and J. Trzaska) and which also has a strong mutual aid organization. A special wave of emigration occurred after the defeat of the 1905 revolution when many socialists persecuted in Poland came to the United States and strengthened the ranks of their party here. Before and during the First World War this organization had considerable influence among Polish Americans and was led, among others, by Zygmunt Piotrowski, later deputy to the Polish Diet



and leader of the TUR, and Michal Sokolowski, later Polish socialist senator.

Recently the communists have gained some measure of influence among the Polish workers in the United States. They are grouped around the communist newspaper *Glos Ludowy* (Voice of the People) published in Detroit and around the self-help organizations of the "International Workers' Order." The political line of the *Glos Ludowy* has followed the same vicissitudes as that of the *Daily Worker*.

After 1918, many Polish workers abroad returned to Poland, moved by sincere patriotism. A Union of Polish Mechanics of America was founded in Poland and set up a factory in which the returning emigrants had shares. According to information I obtained from former participants in this movement, workers returned to Poland amid great enthusiasm and with high hopes, bringing their savings with them. This experiment reminds us of the suggestion made by Louis Adamic, the well-known author of "Two Way Passage," that emigrants return to Europe after the present war and introduce the American way of life into their native countries.

The results of the experiment made by the Union of Polish Mechanics of America were mostly disastrous for the Americans. An enormous majority of the workers returned to America, because they were unable to adjust themselves to their motherland; during their absence from Poland much had changed there while for their part, they had become adjusted to American conditions, had adopted American standards of conduct and above all American technological culture, and had become accustomed to the high American standard of living. The Poland they found was no longer the Poland of their youth and new social forces had developed there. I spoke with many who returned to the United States and found they had not lost their feelings for the old country. Often they had to begin everything from scratch, for they had liquidated their businesses in America and used their savings for their trips.

Today Americans of Polish extraction would have even more difficulty in adjusting themselves to Poland than twenty-five years ago. Nevertheless, among the Polish workers there is a great interest in their native land, and here and there one comes across people who intend to return to help in the work of reconstruction. I know personally a Polish worker in Bridgeport whom I met some time ago in Poland, when he visited his native

land with his son. He had an excellent knowledge of Polish culture and the history of the Polish democratic movement. This worker today is collecting instruments, hammers, tongs and saws in a huge chest, and intends to send them to Poland after the war, where, he says, there will be a lack of tools. On the other hand, the memory of the unsuccessful experiment after the last war is still alive.

In the light of this experiment, Adamic's project, as far as Poland is concerned, has no practical value. In the future reconstruction of Europe (and of Poland as part of it), American technicians of Polish extraction are likely to play their part; they will be particularly useful in view of their knowledge of the language and their feeling for their old homeland. But a re-emigration similar to that after the First World War should be avoided, especially since the conditions in Europe will be even harder than in 1918, not to mention the fact that a still longer absence has inevitably further loosened the old ties. Furthermore, although returning emigrants might exert a beneficial influence in special fields, European democracy cannot be restored by them, for democracy cannot be imposed from outside, but must be the spontaneous creation of the people.

After 1850 many Polish workers emigrated from Prussian-occupied Poland to Westphalia, where they created numerous miners' colonies. Polish workers also went to the heart of Russia and, together with Polish engineers, played an active part in developing Russian industry.

After 1918 the United States drastically reduced immigration, and the Polish quota was insignificant. Meanwhile, Poland could not absorb its own population increase, one of the largest in Europe, and thus the Poles began to emigrate to France, which needed labor power. There the Polish workers found employment in agriculture, mining, industry and road-building, and large numbers of Polish miners settled in northern France. Soon Polish sections were formed in the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), as well as numerous Polish workers' organizations, directed by the Polish socialist, E. Freyd. The Polish emigrants to France soon adjusted themselves to local conditions and developed a sincere attachment to France and her democratic institutions.



*Part Five*

POLISH LABOR UNDER THE NAZIS



---

## The Underground Struggle

---

In September, 1939, Poland was invaded by German armies from the west and by Russian armies from the east. The two invaders met on the San and Bug rivers where a line of demarcation was drawn.

In the part occupied by Russia, the leading representatives of the working class movement were arrested, and many of them were sent to Siberia, while others disappeared without a trace. The Soviet authorities proceeded to organize trade unions under their own control. They moved cautiously as far as the organization of the Communist Party was concerned; in fact, no action was undertaken through it, but the Soviet system was propagandized by other methods, through the trade unions. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children of various classes were also deported to the Soviet Union, chiefly to Siberia.<sup>1</sup> The Russian occupation, however, did not last long.

Under German occupation, ruthless political terror was applied almost immediately, and the administrative authorities, the SS-troops and the Gestapo arrived upon the heels of the invading troops.

The following report by the underground leadership of the Polish laboring masses dated February, 1943—that is to say, after the unprecedented massacre of the Polish Jews—gives a picture of the situation. This report was sent through underground channels to Major Attlee, leader of the British Labour Party.

“The Central Executive Committee of the Working Masses’ Underground Movement in Poland, representing all groups of the pre-war Socialist movement in Poland, appeals to you and

---

<sup>1</sup> Eugene M. Kulischer in his book, “Displacement of Population in Europe” (International Labor Office, Montreal, 1943), estimates the number of deportees from eastern Poland at 1,500,000.

to our British comrades, in a matter that does not concern Poland alone.

"The destructive action carried out by the Germans, applied to us on the principle of total warfare, is entering on a new phase of conquering further *Lebensraum* for Germany.

"After throwing Polish peasants out of their homesteads in western Poland, illegally 'incorporated' in the Reich, after murdering hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens there, and seizing their entire property, they carried out the appalling massacre of one and a half million Jews, who were Polish citizens.

"Now they have started to apply a similar action of destruction to Poles living in the central part of Poland. Hundreds of villages have already been burned down there, together with all the people's property.

"Not one day passes without mass executions. There is not one place where the gallows has not already been erected.

"In the Lublin and Zamosc districts, where this criminal action is raging most furiously at present, under the direction of Globocnik, Gestapo chief of that district, people are being thrown out of their homes, the strongest men and women deported to forced labor in the Reich and the weaker sent to concentration camps where they are murdered in gas chambers.

"At the same time the whole notorious machinery of extermination is constantly in use at Oswiecim, Treblinka, Radogoszcz, Majdanek and other concentration camps where several hundred thousands of persons have already been murdered.

"The Germans cynically declare that when they themselves are falling at the front, the number of Poles who are their neighbors must decrease accordingly.

"Whenever the Germans suffer defeat, as now in Africa, the whole fury of their cruelty is directed against us.

"We have been brought to such a state that the forms of self-defense instituted up to now may, at any moment, be transformed into an open uprising, deprived of any chance of success because we should go unarmed.

"You must not take our words as a complaint, for long before the outbreak of the war we chose to fight against fascism, fully aware of what that entailed, but we appeal to you to find some means of restraining the total barbarism of the Germans.

"It is not sufficient to give assurances that the perpetrators of these crimes will be punished after the war, this is without effect on the criminal complacency with which the whole German public regards these crimes.

"The German nation must be made to understand today that it is responsible for the criminal deeds of the Hitlerite hang-

men. They will only understand it and when collective murders in our country are followed by immediate reprisals, not against the army but against the centers of civilian life on territory where war operations are not in progress.

"Perhaps then our protest will gain in strength.

"We know how difficult it is for civilized people to decide to use such methods, but today your scruples merely incite the invaders to greater cruelty.

"Therefore, we are appealing to you, today, just as in 1939 from besieged Warsaw we called for your help at a time when Poland fell before the superior strength of the enemy.

"We appeal to you to take the last remaining means which may even partially restrain the Hitlerite murderers. If we are to maintain at least a minimum condition until the turning point comes, the world must send us immediate help.

"Liberty, Equality, Independence!

"(signed) February, 1943

"The Central Executive Committee of the  
Working Masses' Underground Movement in Poland."

This appeal is reproduced here for purely illustrative purposes. The persecution of the Jewish population in the ghettos is generally known.<sup>1</sup> The Polish worker is shedding his blood generously, but he is not the only one to be victimized. In Poland, everyone is paying the price of blood in the struggle against the occupying power.

#### RESISTANCE GROUPS

The defeat was followed by a period of dejection and symptoms of collapse, but this period was of short duration. The Polish people adjusted themselves quickly to the new conditions, and no sooner had the cannon ceased firing than underground newspapers began to appear. At first they were brief communiqués, news releases, small posters with appeals, but soon afterwards a "regular" underground press made its appearance, proving that the underground organizations were

<sup>1</sup> Factual material about the persecution of the Polish population can be found in "The Black Book of Poland" (New York: Putnam's Sons), and in "The Polish White Book" (Republic of Poland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. German Occupation of Poland, Extract of Note addressed to the Allied and neutral powers. New York: Greystone Press and Roj-in-Exile, Publ.); "The Black Book of Polish Jewry," Roy Publishers, New York, 1943; S. Mendelsohn, "The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto," The Yiddish Scientific Institute, New York, 1944; "Armed Resistance of the Jews in Poland," by Jakob Apenszlak and Moshe Polakiewicz, published by the American Federation for Polish Jews, New York, 1944. Much valuable material can also be found in "Poland Fights."



active. These organizations were formed shortly after the military defeat, and followed old, traditional, tested models. The fact that there were almost 120 underground newspapers in Poland eloquently illustrates the vitality of the movement.

Let us imagine for a moment that the impossible has happened: that the Germans have occupied the United States and abolished the freedom of the press and of association. The Americans have no experience in conspiratorial activity, they are a fortunate people for whom democracy has become part of their very life, and they would therefore have to begin from the beginning and create an underground by inventing new forms for it or borrowing them from other nations.

The situation of the Poles was different. They did not have to rack their brains as to how to build their underground movement. For a century and a half the underground struggle had been an integral part of Polish life under the Russian occupation. "Underground work" was a great heroic legend on which the younger generations had been brought up, and the people knew how such work had to be done. Under Nazism the conditions of this activity are different from what they were under Tsarism, for the terror and persecutions have reached an unprecedented height. But the old methods were soon adjusted to fit the new conditions, and Poland took her old traditional path of underground work, traced by the insurrection of 1863, by the underground period of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in 1905 and the POW or Polish Military Organization of 1917. Kunicki's letter, Baron's speech before the court-martial, the behavior of sentenced worker militants in the face of death, served as models of the courage demanded by the underground struggle, and today this struggle is carried on by the workers, peasants and intellectual groups. In this book we shall limit ourselves to describing the activities of the workers' organizations.

During the initial period, contact among the various socialist groups within Poland was extremely difficult, and there were also differences among them on questions of leadership and ideology. However, from the middle of 1943, the underground labor movement in Poland has been consolidated under a unified leadership. Four of the most important political groups in Poland—the socialist workers' movement, the peasant movement, the moderate elements of the nationalist party and the Christian Democrats—which together comprise the overwhelm-

ing majority of the Polish population—have formed a kind of permanent council or “underground Senate.” They are the basis of the Polish government in London with which they are in constant communication. This is a government of national unity in which progressive and democratic elements predominate, while including also representatives of the Right. It has been formed for the duration of the war in order to carry on the struggle against the enemy. The Polish government in London is in touch with the representatives of the underground movement through its delegate in Poland, and in its policies tries to follow the instructions and recommendations received from the homeland.

In No. 121 of the WRN (these letters stand for *Wolnosc, Rownosc, Niepodleglosc*—freedom, equality, independence), the main organ of the Polish Underground Labor Movement, we find in an editorial a picture of the political situation after the death of General Sikorski:

“The work of the Polish Government in London is connected closely with what is being done here within occupied Poland. It reflects, directly and harmoniously, Poland’s and the Polish people’s desires.

“There are three political groups outside the Government, groups that busy themselves with noisy manifestations of their intentions. But it is precisely their past and their present political position that condemns them to remaining outside the main framework of Polish politics. One of the groups is the ‘Sanacja’ (the men of the pre-war regime). They boast about Colonel Beck’s ‘achievements’ and their own constitutional ideas. Another, the ‘National Revolutionary Camp’ (ONR), adheres consistently to its own fascist ideas and it attempts to stir up violent dissension both at home and abroad. These two groups must realize that they must be left out of the picture completely at a time when a democratic People’s Poland is being built in co-operation with the democratic forces of the world. The third group is the Communists. It is their intention to use the occupation of Poland by Soviet troops as a means for seizing power. At present, they are inimical not only to the Polish Government, but to the desires and interests of the Polish people as a whole. One can only despise such renegades.

“The Polish Government in London is representative of the broad social forces of Poland. It is based on the confidence of Polish workers, peasants, and democratic intellectuals. Difficulties resulting from the conspiratorial technique of political activities in Poland make it hard to include minor Polish political

groups inside Poland that accept the Polish Government's statement of democratic principles and the coalition agreement. But their co-operation is wholeheartedly accepted and welcome."

The Polish socialist underground movement, for reasons of secrecy, had to abandon its traditional name: Polish Socialist Party, during the underground struggle against the Germans and to assume another name: The Working Masses' Underground Movement of Poland. After the retreat of the Germans, they reassumed the original name. The communists frequently tried to operate under the name of the Socialist or Workers' Party.

Within the Polish underground movement, the peasants and workers' organizations are achieving unity. The unity of the peasants and workers is of great importance for the future of Polish democracy, for on this unity depends the answer to the vital question—will the Poland of the future be a workable popular democracy?

The struggle waged by the underground organizations of today is far more difficult than it ever was in the past. The oppressions which strike everyone without distinction of class are of unprecedented cruelty; it is quite possible, however, that the intellectuals suffer more than the rest, because the Nazis believe they can destroy the Polish nation by destroying its intellectuals. It is not our purpose here to describe the deportations and mass executions—the whole system of biological extermination applied by the German oppressors. It will suffice to say that no cruelty has succeeded in breaking the spirit of the Polish population. Poland is the only country in Europe that did not produce a Quisling, and is the only country that has been most cruelly treated by the invader.

Despite all the oppressions and suffering, the underground continues to wage an inexorable battle against the Germans. Militant labor organizations carry on the greater part of this fight, which includes sabotage, planned military operations and guerrilla warfare.

The Germans retaliate by measures which decimate the workers' ranks. Hundreds of anonymous fighters for the European revolution and against barbarism have been shot by firing squads. In one small town—Kamienna Skarzysk—300 workers were shot at the beginning of 1940, and this is only one of many acts of oppression. Many working class leaders gave their lives for the cause, among them Mieczyslaw Niedzialkow-

ski, a member of the Committee for the Defense of Warsaw, who was shot a few months after the fall of the Polish capital. Kazimierz Czapinski, a prominent socialist and leader of the educational movement, died in a concentration camp, as did Adam Prochnik, historian of the Polish labor movement, and Stanislaw Dubois, a prominent youth and labor leader. There were innumerable other victims, all of them men of great valor.

But death does not weaken the fighting spirit of the Poles. To describe their struggle in all its aspects would be impossible here. As illustrations we shall merely cite the battle in the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw and the Third Battle of Warsaw in 1943 in which the workers, both Jews and Christians, played an active part. The following is a translation of a report received directly from Poland.

## The Battle of the Ghetto: 1943

### UNDERGROUND REPORT (JUNE, 1943)

At the outbreak of war, the Jewish population of Warsaw was 370,000. In the course of one year the figure increased to 433,000. Thousands of Jewish families left their towns, villages, and homesteads around Warsaw and crowded into the capital. On November 15, 1940, the Germans established the ghetto. Anyone attempting to escape was threatened with death.

The removal of the population of the Warsaw ghetto was ordered on July 22, 1942, and went on at the average rate of 4,350 daily. By September 21, 1942, the action was finished. According to German sources, 254,374 Jews were deported from Warsaw to the east, 11,580 were directed to forced labor camps. Respective figures of those executed on the spot amounted to 498 in July, 2,305 in August, and 3,158 in September 1942. For the month of October, only 40,000 ration cards were issued by the German authorities for distribution in the Warsaw ghetto.

On January 18, 1943, the Germans decided upon the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, and detachments of SS and *Schupo* entered the ghetto. Some of the ghetto inhabitants barricaded themselves in single blocks of houses and began desperate resistance. The Germans suffered casualties in dead and wounded. On the fifth day tanks were brought up. A number of houses were burned. In the houses they succeeded in taking,

the Germans killed all the Jewish defenders. Over 1,000 perished. After a few days, the fighting ceased and the fate of the rest of the ghetto remained in suspense.

However, it was only postponed for several weeks.

In March, 1943, the Germans determined to transfer the population of the Warsaw ghetto, a part of which worked in military plants and in factories supervised by the Germans. The management of these plants notified their Jewish employees that the plants were to be transferred from Warsaw, and that the Jews were expected to report voluntarily for transfer to the new locations. The German employers assured the Jews that they had nothing to fear, that their work was fully appreciated and valued, that their families would not be divided and their belongings would not be confiscated, that housing conditions would be good, and so forth.

At the same time, the Germans warned the Jews that any attempt to resist, to circulate enemy rumors, or to escape into the "Aryan" part of Warsaw would depreciate the general situation and place their lives in jeopardy.

#### YOUTH FIRM ON REMAINING IN GHETTO

The greatest part of the ghetto population rejected the German efforts to tempt their victims into agreeing to the removal. The youth of both sexes were especially firm in this decision, knowing that every step beyond the ghetto walls would merely bring them nearer to death. These young people, the majority of the remaining Jewish population, preferred passive and eventually active resistance to deportation from the ghetto, whose walls, amid the general terror and insecurity, seemed the last defense of their safety.

About the middle of April, 1943, the Germans ordered a large contingent of ghetto inhabitants sent to the concentration camp in Trawniki. According to the Nazis, of the number named for deportation, no more than 200 persons reported.

On the night of April 18-19, German police and SS detachments surrounded the ghetto. A large number of SS men in cars and tanks, well armed, equipped with machine guns and reinforced by auxiliary detachments of Ukrainians, Esthonians, and Lithuanians, invaded the ghetto streets. The Jews resisted, and the battle of the Warsaw ghetto began.

During the first week of the battle, the defense, in which al-

most the entire population of the ghetto fought as one man, was strongly organized, perfectly planned, and effective, despite the tremendous odds in men, arms, and ammunition. The Germans lost hundreds of dead and wounded. Several times they were forced by the defenders to retreat beyond the walls of the ghetto.

In the first week, the struggle was like regular military action, and the ghetto shook continually under the thunder of heavy fire.

#### APRIL 21—GERMANS USE FIRE

As a result of the defeats inflicted upon them during the first two days of the struggle, the Nazis changed their tactics. On April 21, they began to use fire in a savage attempt to destroy the chief resistance points. In addition to incendiary bombs and grenades, which set many buildings ablaze, they also used heavy artillery. For strategic reasons, they burnt three houses on Długa street, adjoining the ghetto, after removing the inhabitants. The Germans then set up artillery along the streets surrounding the ghetto and installed heavy machine guns on the roofs of neighboring buildings. The ghetto was placed under regular siege.

During the day, German detachments advanced into the ghetto area, but retired at night, when they limited their operations to reconnaissance and continuous firing.

The Jewish fighters carried out a series of successful sorties, rushing the besieging Germans from behind the ghetto walls and fighting until forced to retire. After several days of fierce struggle, however, the ammunition of the defenders began to give out and the Germans then began to systematically destroy one house after another.

On April 23, the Nazis gained the central and peripheral sections of the ghetto, and the center of the struggle was transferred to the northern sector. In the meantime, the remaining Jews harassed the Germans with guerrilla tactics and flank attacks in the areas that were gradually being cleaned up by the attackers. In the still unconquered sections of the ghetto, near Okopowa Street (next to the largest Jewish cemetery in Warsaw) and in the neighborhood of Powazki (the largest Catholic cemetery in Warsaw), the main force of Jewish fighters kept up fierce resistance.

Unable to penetrate farther, the Germans showered the defenders with incendiary bombs. In retaliation, the Jews set fire to war plants and military warehouses. The entire ghetto was ablaze.

After a long and uninterrupted bombardment, and with the help of tanks, the Germans finally broke into the northern section of the ghetto.

The defense of the ghetto was led and conducted by the Jewish Fighting Organization with the help of the Polish underground. Its actual strength cannot be estimated accurately, but it was able to hold the Warsaw ghetto for weeks against the vastly superior force of the Germans. During those tragic and heroic weeks, the Jewish Fighting Organization issued a manifesto to the people of Warsaw. Signed by the Central Committee of the Jewish Working Masses of Poland (*Bund*) it reads:

"Residents of Warsaw!

"We know that the Polish underground movement pays homage to the fighters in the ghetto. But only the United Nations can give immediate and concrete help.

"In the name of the millions of murdered Jews, in the name of those who have been burnt, tortured and massacred, in the name of those who are still struggling heroically, though doomed to certain death in the unequal fight, we call upon the world to hear us today.

"The Allies must avenge our death and our suffering, so that even the bestial enemy understands for what he is being punished. Our Allies must realize at last the full extent of the historic responsibility that will fall upon those who have remained inactive in the face of the Nazis' unparalleled crime against an entire people, the tragic epilogue of which is taking place today.

"The desperate heroism of the men in the ghetto must rouse the world to action commensurate with the greatness of the moment!"

After a week of stubborn resistance in the face of a superior enemy who was steadily and inevitably penetrating deeper and deeper into the ghetto, the Jewish fighters changed from regular military tactics to guerrilla warfare.

On April 28, the Germans had close to 6,000 men in action, well armed, equipped with a great number of machine guns, artillery, flamethrowers, armored trucks, tanks, and airplanes. The Jewish fighters organized large-scale attacks, mostly at

night. During the day they fought defensively to repel Germans attempting to break into buildings and shelters. This fight, varying in intensity, lasted a long time.

At the close of the fifth week, the Jews still fought. Ambulances steadily carried away dead and wounded Germans.

During this entire period, the Germans even hesitated to enter houses that had been blasted by artillery and machine-gun fire, despite the dead silence that clearly marked the absence of defenders. They did not advance openly along the streets, but took every precaution before making any move.

The Germans also blew up houses where resisting Jews had taken cover; they planted mines, flooded the cellars, and used every barbarism to gain their end.

When the fighting began, the ghetto held nearly 40,000 inhabitants. As the Germans advanced, they murdered a part of the Jewish population and deported the rest.

By April 29, nearly 2,000 Warsaw Jews had been killed in action or murdered in their houses and shelters. Three thousand more were found dead in buildings burnt by the Germans.

From May 2-5, after the encirclement and subsequent invasion of the so-called lesser ghetto (the triangle-area between Zelazna, Twarda, and Prosta streets), nearly 3,000 Jews were driven from the ghetto. After five weeks of struggle, the Germans drove 20,000 Jews from the ghetto and shipped them east. The rest continued the fight, hiding in dugouts, sewers, and inaccessible cellars.

By the end of April, 1943, the Germans' chief weapon against the Jews was fire. As they advanced, they burnt one house after another, until the northern section of Warsaw was completely destroyed.

The following streets were entirely destroyed by fire: Nalewki, Nowolipie, Nowolipki, Franciszkanska, Karmelicka, Niska, Mila, Muranowski Square, Smocza and Gesia.

Many other streets of the ghetto were partly destroyed. For days the sky over the city was thick with clouds of smoke rising from the ghetto. At night, a bloody glow hung over the northern section of the Polish capital.

Numerous private and government buildings in the streets adjacent to the ghetto were also burnt. In the early days of May, the Germans issued an order for the complete evacuation, within 24 hours, of the large Evangelical Hospital on Karmelicka Street, and then set fire to all buildings in the neighbor-



hood of the ghetto. The hospital building was razed in the process.

On May 17, the Germans blew up the largest synagogue in Warsaw, on Tlomackie Street. They failed to warn the Hospital of the Maltese Order next to the synagogue, just outside the ghetto walls. All the window panes in the hospital were shattered and several patients suffered severe nervous breakdowns.

All the buildings in the ghetto, including workshops and public utility plants, installations and offices, were reduced to ruins. The sewers, water mains, gas pipes and electric wires, street car and telephone installations were also seriously damaged.

Whenever the Germans broke into shelters, they massacred all persons found within, often using poison gas. In a temporary Jewish hospital on Franciszką Street, the Germans shot all the patients in their beds. Many Jews died in the blazing ruins of their homes, for the Nazis allowed no victim to leave a burning building, shot those who tried to escape, or pushed them back into the flames. Firemen were not permitted to save the Jews from the blazing houses or to play water on those who rushed out in burning clothes.

When some of the Jews, disheartened and exhausted by the fight, reported to the Germans for deportation, the Germans separated the old, the sick, and the children, and murdered them on the spot. Those who looked healthy and strong were loaded into trains and sent off.

A Jewish mother threw one of her children from a fourth floor window of a burning building. The second child resisted, clinging desperately to its mother; in the end, both jumped.

Several women gathered in the windows of the top floor of a house set aflame by the Germans. One of them deliberately threw herself out. The rest stood on the window sill, desperate and undecided. Then the SS men and German girls in Nazi uniform who stood near by shouted: "Come on, come on!" When the second Jewish woman fell to the sidewalk, the laughing German girls and men applauded.

At the end of May, 1943, the Warsaw ghetto had ceased to exist. All that remains of it is a desolate waste, hundreds of charred ruins, a walled city of death and destruction to which access is still forbidden.

The Jewish casualty lists have not been compiled and never will be, for the bodies of the dead were burnt with the build-

ings. In the basements of the ghetto houses hundreds of charred corpses still wait to be removed.

Those of Warsaw's Jews who survived the battle of the ghetto were sent to death camps.

The attitude of the labor movement toward this heroic episode is well expressed in the following appeal issued to the fighters of the ghetto in April, 1943.

#### Comrades and Citizens!

Since April 18, when the occupant launched his drive to exterminate finally and completely the remaining Polish Jews, the Warsaw ghetto has been in arms against the brutal enemy. Condemned by Hitler to death, the Jews in the ghetto have refused to submit passively to the Nazi hangmen. They are resisting furiously the bloody ruffians in defense of their rights as citizens and their honor as human beings.

Once more the glare of flames reddens the sky over Warsaw; once more the firing of rifles and guns, the explosions of grenades, resound in the streets of the city. Workers and professionals are the heart and soul of the groups of fighting Jews who have risen in armed protest against Nazi violence. The Polish national flag floats over their heads as they give battle to the enemy. Their action is not an isolated one; it is a link in the uninterrupted chain of resistance that for four years has been carried on throughout Poland.

It is most important, at the present historic moment, that all Poland and the entire world fully understand the significance of each episode in our struggle for liberation. The battle of Krasnobrod, the series of clashes between detachments of the Underground Armed Forces in Poland and the invader, the present armed fight of the Polish citizens confined behind the walls of the Warsaw ghetto—all these testify to Poland's irreconcilable hatred of the occupant, to our unshakeable determination to win complete independence. No drop of blood spilled in these battles for freedom will be lost. Every new victim will cement more firmly the future edifice of liberty and social justice for all the citizens of the New Poland.

We send our fraternal greetings to the Jewish workers and professionals who, in the face of certain and inevitable death, have chosen to perish with arms in hand rather than submit passively to the executioner.

We pledge solemnly to them that their deed will not be lost without an echo. It will join the heroic legends of Fighting Poland; it will become the common heritage of the Polish people,

a heritage that will provide a firm foundation for the structure of the future reconstructed Polish Republic.

We appeal to the peoples of the world! In the face of the Nazis' brutal pattern of destruction, which they have consistently imposed upon our land for the past four years, since its defeat and occupation, in the face of unprecedented terror, our people, murdered, oppressed, and maltrated, have risen constantly in flaming protest. But we need help. This help must come soon. The enemy must be defeated before he crushes the vital forces of the land and finally destroys its people.

We call upon the fighting world for the earliest possible offensive against German power, but in the meantime we shall not remain passive. We shall redouble our efforts in order to prepare for the general uprising in Poland that, together with the Allied offensive, will strike the death blow at totalitarianism of all shades.

Freedom—Equality—Independence!

*The Underground Movement of the Working Masses of Poland.* [Polish Socialist Party—Ed.]

Warsaw, April, 1943.

On the fifth day of the battle the Jewish fighters addressed the following appeal to the Poles:

Poles, citizens, soldiers for freedom! From under the beating of the cannons which the German army is hammering against our houses, the homes of our mothers, wives and children; from under the blow of the machine guns, which we have captured in the struggle against the cowardly German police and SS forces; from under the smoke of conflagration and the blood of the murdered Warsaw Ghetto, we, slaves of the Ghetto, send you our greetings. We know that with heartfelt sorrow and tears of sympathy, with admiration and terror you witness the epilogue of the battle we have carried on for several days against the cruel invader.

But you see also that each threshold in the Ghetto has been until now and will continue to be a stronghold. We may all die in this battle, but we will not succumb. We breathe, as you do, with the desire for revenge and punishment for all the crimes of our common enemy.

This is a battle for our and your freedom.

For your and our human, social and national honor.

We shall avenge the crimes of Oswiecim, Treblinka, Belzec and Majdanek.

Long live the brotherhood of battle and blood of fighting Poland.

Long live freedom.

Death to the hangmen.

Long live the life and death struggle against the invader.

To complete the picture we shall quote articles from three different Polish underground newspapers. Written by underground fighters close to the tragic battlefield, they carry more weight than an evaluation written abroad.

The following excerpt is from the *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, April 29, 1943, No. 17 (172), which reflects the views of the underground organizations supporting the Polish government in exile.

Polish public opinion, seeing only the path that leads to death (because the secrets of the camps were well guarded), and knowing the German invader, has had no illusions about the fate of the deported Jews. Deeply stirred, Polish public opinion found it impossible to understand why there was no struggle and resistance, why the Jewish police was so zealous and why those who remained alive were so apathetic. The tragedy of the Jews was conceived of as something fatalistic in its frightfulness by Polish public opinion and even more so because the civilized world did not react in an active way.

The second phase of the devilish destruction of the Jews in Poland began a week ago. The Germans started to evacuate from Warsaw the remaining 40,000 Jews. The Ghetto replied with armed resistance. The Jewish Fighter Organization began the struggle in spite of tremendous difficulties. With limited strength and very little arms, without water, blinded by smoke and fire the Jewish fighters defended streets and single houses, retreating silently step by step, not so much from the enemy using his most modern weapons, but primarily from the intolerable heat of the burning buildings in the congested area. Victory for the fighters could have meant only to help the escape of a number of those within the Ghetto walls, victory could have meant the weakening of the enemy; victory finally would have been death with arms in hand.

The passive death of the Jews until now had not created any new values; it was useless; but their death, gun in hand, can introduce new values in the life of the Jewish people and has crowned the agony of the Jews in Poland with the halo of armed struggle for the right to live. That is how Warsaw [Polish] public opinion reacted to the defense of the Ghetto, while listening appreciatively to the bursting salvos of the defenders, watching worriedly the reflection of the flames and the smoke of the ever-spreading conflagrations. The fighting citizens of the

Polish state from behind the Ghetto walls have become closer to us. Polish public opinion can comprehend them better than those victims who were unresistingly dragged to their death. The armed revolt of the Ghetto is a hard blow to the already consistently waning prestige of Nazi Germany.

It is our strict Christian duty to aid those Jews who escaped from the burning Ghetto.

The following is from *Robotnik* (May 1, 1943, No. 113), the underground organ of the Polish Socialist Party:

After the liquidation of the Cracow Ghetto the Nazi destruction column began finally to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto. This time the Nazi hangmen were disappointed. The Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto, most of them workers, had anticipated this possibility and had prepared themselves to fight. Their heroic resistance forced the Germans to wage war with field artillery and airplanes, to beleaguer the Ghetto in accordance with the traditional rules of military science. The Polish population of our capital sympathizes with the heroic Jews, and simultaneously it laughs with contempt at the German "heroes" of Stalingrad. During the first days of the revolt two flags were raised in the Ghetto—Polish and Jewish. There was also a banner that called the Polish population to solidarity. The first three tanks the Germans sent into the Ghetto did not return. Rumor says that the Jews stormed the Pawiak prison and liberated its inmates.

The following is from *Nowe Drogi* (June 20, 1943), a democratic underground paper:

[The Germans] met with desperate armed resistance. Two or three thousand fighters forced them to retreat and when they returned with heavy machine guns, cannons and tanks, at very many points a bitter battle ensued, defense to the last grenade, to the last cartridge. The revolt proper did not last long. It was of course drowned in blood. But in the labyrinth of ruins, left from the September campaign [of 1939], in cellars and underground tunnels, in specially constructed secret chambers, there remained a number of people in hiding. Part of the fighters perished, some managed to escape outside the Ghetto walls. There remained in the Ghetto those who had walled themselves in with food supplies, most of them months earlier, in the hope that underground they might be able to hold out until the end of the war. The Germans, in their impotence and cowardice, conceived the fiendish plan of killing them by fire and smoke, of suffocating those still alive, crushing them under the ruins. They burned a large portion of Warsaw, setting fire to house

after house. The former "District of Jewish Settlement" ceased to exist.

The decision to destroy the Ghetto this way—apart from the tragedy itself—compromised the Germans in an extraordinary, most ridiculous manner. At the end of the fourth year of an unparalleled occupation, the Germans were forced to introduce their heaviest weapons and troops armed to the teeth, to install a veritable general staff, to suffer severe losses in order to overcome the resistance of several hundred . . . Jews. There is enough grim irony in this victory on the front of the Nalewki and Muranowska Streets in the face of setbacks and even defeats on all fronts of the world. These events of the great week in April bear a meaning deeper than irony—both politically and morally. On the roofs of the fighting Ghetto fluttered the Polish flag; the enemy took it down, only to have it appear again. The Jews carried on, in the tradition of the September days of the defense of Warsaw, the fight for freedom under the banner of the Republic. The Jewish national minority produced units which of their own free will joined the struggle against our common enemy. Their blood therefore was not spilled in vain. Once again we emphasize the moral value of the tragic struggle, full of pathos and hopelessness. The Polish democratic camp joins public opinion of the capital and of Poland not only in their compassion for the sufferings—suffering is the lot of all of us—but also in genuine respect for those who chose and will choose a soldier's death instead of the death of a slave. The incomparably cynical proclamation of Governor Fischer explains the decision to liquidate the Ghetto as a measure against the Communists; he demands that we denounce to the authorities "every living Jew." "No ethical principles come into consideration here," he states in so many words.

The black clouds of smoke from the blazing Ghettos float over Poland day and night. They will not obscure the German crime, not the heroism of the fighters, nor our conscience.

There is no doubt that the communists too participated in these struggles although the reports about it are scanty since they evidently did not play a leading role. The fighters of the ghetto belonged to all the labor parties, and the long roll of honor of those who fell in the heroic struggle comprises men and women, boys and girls of the Jewish Socialist Party (*Bund*), the socialist zionist's organization *Poale Zion*, and other organizations. And it must be remembered that Warsaw was not the only fighting Jewish community; the Polish Jews opposed armed resistance to the Nazis in many other places,

such as Bialystok, Wilno, Tarnow, and the death camps of Tremblinka, Sosibor, Poniatow, and Trawniki.

## The Battle of Warsaw: 1944

Perhaps the most significant battle waged by an underground in this war was the Warsaw uprising.

"This was one of the most heroic episodes in the history of cities," wrote *The New York Times* (October 4, 1944). "One of the greatest episodes in revolutionary history has ended in tragedy," wrote the London socialist *New Leader* (October 14, 1944). The uprising was a tragic venture because of the indifference and lack of outside support and its hopelessness which became apparent after a few days.

In July, 1944, the Soviet forces began to approach the outskirts of Warsaw. The Germans were hastily evacuating their families and dismantling industrial installations; the persecution of the Poles was intensified. Warsaw's inhabitants could already hear the roar of Russian guns. The German radio in Warsaw ceased broadcasting.

On July 31, the Polish Prime Minister, Mikolajczyk, told Molotov who was in Moscow that he expected an outbreak in Warsaw at any moment. Marshal Stalin, on August 2, expressed to Mikolajczyk his conviction that Warsaw would be liberated on August 6. The same hopefulness prevailed in the press. "Thus the first of the martyred cities of Europe to suffer the horrors of German air bombardment and National Socialist rule is also the first to see deliverance at hand," wrote the London *Times* of August 1, and the Soviet official magazine, *War and the Working Class*, forecast that in July, Warsaw would be the first liberated city of Europe.

*Armja Krajowa*, the Polish underground Home Army, backed by the socialist labor movement, which was the largest underground army of Poland, was on the alert. The feeling that a great moment was approaching was general. This feeling was not unfamiliar to Warsaw—the city of traditional uprisings and revolutionary struggles against foreign yoke and social injustice.

On July 30, those of the Poles in Warsaw and surrounding sections who, at the risk of their lives, were listening to the Moscow radio heard again and again hopeful appeals. Four times that day, the Soviet station in Moscow, *Kosciusko*, called upon the people of Warsaw to take up arms and fight.

Now General Bor, the head of the underground army, gave the long-awaited order, "Tempest." This watchword meant general uprising, the throwing of all underground forces of the Warsaw district into one decisive battle. This was not a call for small partisan warfare, sabotage, and acts of terror; this was the watchword for the coming *grande bataille* of Warsaw.

The word went from one to another carried by boys and girls in their early teens; underground radios repeated again and again "T E M P E S T." Arms were distributed in the underground arsenals; people—mostly workers, students, intellectuals and peasants—hurried from suburbs to assembly points, as did the workers of the Polish Socialist Party and Trade Unions from Wola, Ochota, and other places, although many were already in the uniforms of the *Armja Krajowa* (Polish Home Army).

About 3 or 5 in the afternoon, a loud explosion was heard in the center of the city. A bomb had been planted in the German commandant's office. Almost simultaneously rifle and machine gun firing began. The real battle started on August 1, at 5 P.M., according to schedule.

On the East Bank of the Vistula lies the suburb of Praga, beyond it the suburban settlement of Anin. It was in these places that the first Russian tanks appeared. Everyone expected the Nazi reign of terror to end within a few days.

In their first assault the insurgents seized the most strategically important places and buildings in the center of the town: the telephone station; post office; the Prudential skyscraper in Napoleon Plaza, the tallest building in the city; the electric power plant, some of the railroad stations, and the Polytechnical Institute.

But the most strategic points were the bridges over the Vistula. The efforts of the insurgents were aimed at seizing the bridges and holding them in order to secure passage for the advancing Soviet troops. The poorly armed insurgents could not manage to capture the bridges which were being guarded by heavily armed German troops and artillery. Nevertheless they took positions in neighboring houses, and from there fired on the Germans. According to a Soviet source, the *Information Bulletin of the USSR Embassy in Washington* (November 23, 1944), this impeded the movements of the Germans which was tremendously important for the advancing Soviet army.



Who were the soldiers of Warsaw's August insurrection? Who formed the bulk of the *Armja Krajowa*, which was the most important force of the uprising? The workers of the Warsaw district, members of the labor organizations, students and intelligentsia—a democratic army with a democratic spirit. Under different circumstances the bulk of the Home Army would have been composed of peasants, but the uprising started in the city so that the townspeople outnumbered the peasants in this case.

The morale of the army was high, thanks to its progressive and democratic spirit.

In an article of the Home Army journal, *Biuletyn Informacyjny* of September 9, 1943, a plan for postwar Poland was outlined: "Our aim is a Poland in which freedom of speech, freedom of belief and freedom of assembly will prevail; a Poland of social justice and a decent standard of living for the broadest masses; a Poland liberated from the nonsense of capitalism; a Poland which will nationalize industry and transform our agricultural system and modernize commerce; which will develop co-operatives and industrialize the country. The people are fighting for a Poland which will be politically democratic and which will democratize the economic life and the culture of Poland."

The masses of simple soldiers and democratic officers influenced the formation of new postwar plans for Poland. In the second half of August, the Underground Home Council of Ministers and the Underground Council of National Unity (The Emergency Parliament whose speaker at that time was a socialist) passed some decrees in the spirit of the Home Army. They were printed in the Official Journal of the Republic of Poland. The first decree introduced factory councils as the legal management of factories. Another, aimed at agrarian reform, was a law requiring the breaking down of large estates and distribution among the landless peasants. These were broadcast from the free radio station of "Fighting Warsaw."

It is significant that, before the outbreak, the leader of the insurrection, General Bor, urged the Polish National Council in London, a kind of parliament in exile, to finish its work on decrees concerning land reform and nationalization of key industries.

This was the spirit of the soldiers—poorly clad and armed but rich in courage—of the three divisions which fought in the insurrection, the 10th division called "The *Rataj* Division," the 28th called *Okrzeja*, and the 8th called *Traugutt*. *Rataj*

was the name of the great leader of the Polish peasants, the representative of the Peasant Party in the Polish parliament and the speaker who was executed by the Germans during this war. *Okrzeja* was one of the leaders of the Workers' Revolution of 1905, executed in the citadel of Warsaw by Tsarist Russia. *Traugutt* was a great democratic leader of the insurrection of 1863 also executed at the state Citadel. The names given the divisions are significant because they symbolize the democratic spirit of the insurgents.

Alongside the Polish Home Army and always in close association with it, the remnants of the Jewish Underground Organization fought with equal courage, as well as some detachments of the communist "People's Army." The latter did not play an important role because of its small following. The struggle was led by the Home Army which was the great military organization supported by the masses.

The insurgents fought furiously, but the supply of ammunition and food was diminishing daily and no help from the outside was forthcoming. In addition, the Germans were having some success in fighting the Soviet army struggling on the Eastern Bank of the Vistula. The insurgents were trying desperately to establish contact with the Red army and were broadcasting to London and Moscow for help.

Some sections of the town went from the insurgents to the Germans and back again to the insurgents. Eberhard Schulz, war correspondent for *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, reported: "We had to fight for every stone. . . . Firing was almost at point blank range. Sometimes at thirty yards, sometimes at five yards." In the old city the losses of the insurgents amounted to eighty per cent and were higher among the officers. The Poles fought for each house, for each flat. There were times during which wings and flats of buildings were held alternately by Germans and Poles fighting inside.

The patriots built an extensive system of underground communications through cellars, sewers and water pipes. They knew how to use them and how to communicate and to change their positions in the underground network. The Germans fought in the underground corridors too. They obtained the plans of the Warsaw sewage system and began to blow it up. "We succeeded in that," boasted Sapper Major Herzog over the German radio, "and we have drowned the insurgents like rats."

Help was badly needed indeed. It came first from Polish planes, but throughout the eight days of the insurrection, only three Polish planes from Italian bases brought help. Then, after August 13, came British, South African and Polish crews in greater and greater numbers. But from a strategical point of view, their help was still insignificant despite the great heroism of the flyers. Up to September 14, the Soviet Government refused to allow American planes bringing supplies to Warsaw to land in Soviet-occupied Poland and shuttle back. In the meantime, the Home Army was bleeding to death.

On September 4, the German Luftwaffe destroyed the water works and the power station which, at the beginning of the insurrection, was captured by the socialist militia. Now Warsaw was without water and without light. The town was in flames and there was no more water with which to put out the fires. But the insurgents continued to fight. No "cease fire" order was given, and the people only became grimmer as the expected help still did not come. Then the workers of Warsaw appealed to the conscience of the world.

"We appeal to you on behalf of fighting Warsaw. Our voice is the voice of the people of Warsaw, who, for 150 years, have been rising in every generation to fight against foreign invaders. Our voice is the voice of the workers of Warsaw, who are the backbone of the present fighting in Warsaw. Five years ago Warsaw was the first to put up armed resistance against the aggression of German imperialism and paid for its resistance with 80,000 dead. Then we were alone, but we did not regret our sacrifices because we linked them with the certainty of future victory and the right of Poland to recover full freedom and independence in the hour of triumph of the free nations of the world. . . .

"Never did the Poles waver for a single moment, nor have there been traitors among them. We continued fighting even when the German armies reached the peak of their success, when they occupied all of Europe, when they were at the gates of Moscow and Stalingrad. We lacked one thing only: we did not have sufficient arms to contend against the modern mechanized might of the Nazis. . . .

"Our nation cannot understand why, in the hour of its hardest trial, it should be abandoned. We repudiate all charges and all pretexts which try to veil the truth of the fighting in Warsaw. We know one truth and one reality—the truth of a city which is fighting and dying for the common cause: freedom of

the world. We appeal to the simplest morality in relations between free nations. We appeal to the conscience of the world. Fighting with the utmost strain of nerves and will-power, Warsaw demands that the voice of conscience should be followed by immediate help in the struggle.

"We are addressing this voice of Warsaw to the workers, peasants, democrats, trade unionists, and socialists of the world. We believe that they will make the cause of Warsaw their own cause. We believe, we wish to believe, that immediate and effective help for Warsaw will be a confirmation for the martyred Polish nation of its unyielding faith that a new solidarity of the free nations of the world will be born of the struggle for freedom. After forty days of unequal struggle, fighting among the ruins and fires with the last of their energy, the patriots of Warsaw expect help. This can, and should, and must be granted without delay."

But the conscience of the world, with a few exceptions, was hard to rouse.

In the meantime a long argument developed over the Warsaw uprising. The Soviet press said that it was premature and not co-ordinated with the Soviet effort in spite of the evidence that it started in compliance with the Moscow radio call and that Molotov was informed that an insurrection would take place. Moreover, the insurgents were accused of being traitors: and the head of the Lublin Committee, Osobka Morawski, in a conversation with foreign correspondents intimated that if he got hold of General Tadeusz Komorowski [Bor] he would court-martial him. The fact remains that no help came to the insurgents from the Soviet army at the crucial moment. The Soviet army might have suffered reverses or changed its plan of strategy, which would justify their course of action. This is, however, a question which belongs to history.

On September 18, one hundred American fortresses escorted by about two hundred fighters, took off from British bases and dropped a considerable amount of supplies, sufficient for three days of fighting. If more of this type of help had been given, if two hundred or more fortresses had been sent over several times a week to help the insurgents, the situation in Warsaw would have been different, and the fighters would have felt differently. Polish fliers and soldiers persistently asked their superiors to be sent to help Warsaw. It was explained that for technical and military reasons this was impossible; only the Soviet Union

was in a position to give real help. During the six weeks of the battle, no Russian planes were sighted over Warsaw. On September 13 they appeared when the Russian attack, which they had to abandon before, to capture the suburb of Praga began. Now the Soviet air force, 282 units strong, dropped supplies and went into combat against German planes.

It was now too little and too late. Nearly 240,000 Poles were killed in the insurrection. The Germans blew up all three bridges and cut Warsaw off from the suburb of Praga where the Russians were fighting.

On the 63rd day, the last call came from the Warsaw radio: ". . . The Germans will never conquer Warsaw. . . . There are only ruins left and the Poles who are fighting today will have to rebuild her after the war. Then the ruins will disappear and only graves will be left. A city will rise which will bear the same name. In that new city will live a generation which stood up to fight and fought!"

And then the speaker added: "Long live Poland, do not forget us."

The last to lay down their arms was the workers' division bearing the name of their hero of the Revolution of 1905, *Okrzeja*. The underground soldiers went into captivity. About six hundred thousand of the remaining population was deported by the Germans. Thousands were sent to the "camp of death" at Oswiecim and there was little doubt that they were doomed to perish in German gas chambers. No Polish civilians were permitted to remain in Warsaw by the German authorities.

On January 4, the United Press Correspondent, Henry Shapiro, looked through his binoculars toward Warsaw from the Eastern Bank of the Vistula held by the Soviet forces. "Warsaw is a city of ruins," he wrote. "Standing below one of the city's four bridges, I saw mile after mile of desolation. The naked frame of a fifteen-story building dominated the skyline like a skeleton . . . with the aid of powerful binoculars, I was unable to see any sign of life in the western part of the city, across the river where the Germans are." (*New York Times*, January 5).

On January 17, the Soviet forces liberated Warsaw, but there were no people in Warsaw to liberate, only ruins and stones. It was a dead, silent city. High up on one of the skeleton houses,

a red-white flag had been hoisted; but there were no people of Warsaw, no soldiers of the Home Army to cheer it.

The whole tragedy poses a philosophical problem. The Poles in Warsaw would have been much better off if they had not fought, but behaved as the Italians in Rome did. After all they would have been liberated; and some one hundred thousand people, in spite of German persecution and deportation, would still be alive. But they did fight, choosing to the very end the way which Warsaw has always chosen—uncompromising struggle for liberty. The 150-year-old tradition of insurrections guided the fighting soldiers. On the ruins of Warsaw, an attentive passer-by can read a prophetic inscription, which might be predicting new tragedies in these simple words: "Look, passer-by, here lived a people who would not yield its liberty for comfort. Wrong or right in our decisions, we are children of Europe, and heroism is a cornerstone on which the greatness of Europe was built even before Thermopylae. Perhaps our kind of heroism is wrong today, but we remain old-fashioned Europeans and old-fashioned Polish radical insurgents. You may like it or not but these are the facts you have to consider shaping the fate of this country."

It would be hard to convince most of the fighters to adopt an attitude which is wise and reasonable in this sense. Warsaw is more evidence that the independence and freedom of Poland does not depend upon the Poles themselves. Poland was resurrected in 1918, not because the Poles fought gallantly in insurrections for 150 years, nor because they formed their legions and a military underground organization, the POW of 1917, but just because the great powers, for various reasons, decided to resurrect Poland in the Versailles Treaty. The same situation prevails now, the extent of the sacrifices will have no decisive influence. A wise international policy is more efficacious than heroic deed. The Poles are ready to make sacrifices, and they do not ask a reward for heroism and the sacrifice of human lives. Perhaps it would be better for them to be more thrifty in their sacrifices.

One of the men who survived the insurrection, one of these representing the average opinion of the fighters, would certainly answer to such a proposition:

"We democrats and socialists believe in fighting against oppression, exploitation and injustice whether we are going to win

right now or not. We are not going to appease oppression no matter how much it may cost us. We have fought injustice for 150 years and while other nations may choose another way, we will continue to fight the tyrants."

A hard-boiled realist would remark that such a struggle is only right if it leads to success. History does not record the deeds of unsuccessful heroes, but has plenty of space for successful scoundrels. This may be so, but then Warsaw's defenders are making history for those historians such as Benedetto Croce to whom the history of Europe means the history of the struggle for liberty.

The insurgents of Warsaw were not alone. Like the soldiers of the Paris Commune, the loyalists of Madrid and the soldiers of the Spanish Republic, they were moved by the spirit, the faith, and the belief that the first duty of a free man is to fight oppression.

#### THE IDEOLOGY OF THE UNDERGROUND LABOR MOVEMENT IN POLAND

The underground labor movement in Poland is dominated by the socialist and democratic ideology which was characteristic of the Polish workers in the period of independence. In recent years, Polish socialism has been increasingly influenced by English socialism, and this fact is recognized by the underground press. Thus in an article published in April, 1942,<sup>1</sup> we read: "Polish socialism, after English socialism, was the first to adjust its program and tactics to the present historical period."

In their struggle against the invader, the underground labor organizations have drawn upon the old heritage of the insurrections and the underground struggle against Tsarism. These form an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Articles about the insurrection of 1863 against Russia are published in the underground press: "That year is still alive among us and its events are still meaningful for us. 'Like a doleful Nike of Samothrace you salute us from this earth, immortal insurrection. On your wings hangs our deepest love for you . . .'" (from a radical underground paper of January 21, 1942). The insurrection of

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on a study of Polish underground literature. For obvious reasons the author cannot give the title of the underground publications he has used, except in special cases, and in most cases must limit himself to indicating their date of publication.

1863 and the revolutionary movements that followed it were full of vital experiences; we can learn from them why revolutions are lost, and what tactical and ideological errors must not be committed.

One of the principal slogans of the Polish labor movement is naturally the liberation of Poland from foreign rule.

The Polish workers have taken up the old slogan of Kosciusko's insurrection in 1794. At that time the Poles adapted the French slogan: "Freedom, equality, fraternity" to the conditions of the Polish struggle for liberation from the Tsarist yoke, by changing it to "Freedom, equality, independence." Today this is the slogan of the underground labor movement, and one of its chief organs has as its title the abbreviation of this slogan: WRN.

In one of the underground newspapers (dated January 21, 1942) we can read the following passage: "Two great currents dominate Europe today: the nationalist current and the European, universalist current. Both constitute a mighty protest against the German invasion."

Which of these two currents has been chosen by the Polish labor movement? In its foreign policy, this movement advocates the idea of federation: Free Poland should be a member of a federation of free European nations, which in turn should belong to a universal federation. Thus labor expresses the aspiration of the Polish working masses to preserve their freedom within an international community, a freedom limited by considerations of general security. The Polish labor movement is not waging its present heroic struggle for the sake of returning to the old Europe or the old Poland.

In a long pamphlet entitled "The Tribune of the Peoples" and published in September, 1940, by the workers' underground organizations, we read the following:

"To the old Europe there is no return, as there is no return to pre-September Poland, to pre-June France. There is no return to yesterday.

"The Europe of yesterday is the Europe of Versailles, shaken by economic and social contradictions, pervaded by fascism, a Europe constantly haunted by the specter of war, powerless and helpless. . . .

"From the common economic and political situation an international ideological community will result epitomized in the watchword of the common struggle for freedom. The watch-



word of the international solidarity of the peoples has gained an international mass basis and will find in the peoples of Europe a real force that will put it into effect.

"This common and parallel struggle of all peoples of Europe against the occupation will, under proper military conditions, cease to be only a watchword, and will become a practical task. Moreover the community and parallelism of the struggle will become a condition of success and will be the most efficacious instrument capable of tearing asunder the ring of occupation encompassing all peoples.

"This community must also become the instrument of organizing a new Europe. The universal armed rising of the European peoples must pass into its revolutionary phase. The struggle against fascism as the occupying power must simultaneously be a struggle for the internal freedom of the nations concerned, it must simultaneously be a struggle against the Europe of yesterday which has produced that fascism, it must be a preventive war waged by the peoples against the possibilities, inherent in the capitalistic system, of provoking a new war, and consequently it must be a struggle for Europe's tomorrow that will not only be unlike fascist today, but also unlike capitalistic yesterday.

"What matters, therefore, is that the moment of the simultaneous shaking off of the occupation should not become the parting of the peoples of Europe who would follow their separate roads of freedom. There can be only one way of freedom for all, the common road of the revolutionary unification of free peoples in building a new common Europe. All other roads will only lead the peoples astray to a desperate, this time ultimate, precipice, to a new war.

"Only the international revolutionary action of the working and peasant masses can build Europe as an entity, establish a true, i.e., durable peace, and arrange Europe as a community of free peoples."

In February, 1941, at a secret conference of delegates representing nearly 2,000 groups of workers, peasants and intellectuals "somewhere in Poland," a "manifesto to the peoples of the world" was approved, from which we quote the following passage:

"We are fighting, as is every other conquered nation, for freedom and social justice in all the countries and for a new and better life in a Europe organized as a Commonwealth of Free Peoples."

The articles and declarations from the underground press which have been quoted here exemplify the essential currents that are alive today in the underground labor and peasant movements. These trends found their official expression in the program of the *Poliska Ludowa* (People's Poland) published in Poland in 1941. This program, adopted by the representatives of the underground labor and peasant movements, was submitted by the London representatives of the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Peasants' Party to the Polish National Council, as a proposed basis for the Council's future discussion of the problems of reconstruction of their homeland.

"While they understand and stress the historic role of the common people of Poland, today these organized movements of the laboring masses of the village and city must work to unite all the Polish democratic forces in the fight for the liberation of the Polish Republic from the German yoke. They must also lead in the struggle for the reconstruction of the Polish State within boundaries which would insure its future stability and independence, and provide an adequate guarantee of peace in Central Europe, a State, moreover, which could be sufficiently strong to safeguard the freedom of its neighboring peoples. If this aim is to be realized, the newly independent Poland must from the very first days of its rebirth establish a stable democratic regime based on social reforms which would provide the great masses with the conditions and opportunities for economic, social, and cultural development. . . .

" . . . The Polish Republic will be a member of the Federation of Free European Peoples. Within that federation the Republic will strive to promote a maximum of cohesion. . . ."

The underground movement also supports all the efforts made by the Polish government in London in this direction. As early as 1940 Poland and Czechoslovakia decided to unite in a federation, and in 1942 they signed an agreement to this effect. At an international conference held in New York toward the end of 1941, Czechoslovak, Greek, Yugoslav and Polish delegates signed a declaration on the necessity of close co-operation between the states of Central and Eastern Europe, and as a result of this declaration, the Central and Eastern European Planning Board was set up in New York.

WRN voiced its approval of the Polish-Czechoslovak agreement in the following terms:

"On January 22, 1942, the Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia signed an agreement concerning the organization as

basis of the Confederation, which is to unite the two countries after the war. We have often voiced our approval of the idea of a Confederation of Central and Eastern European Countries, and have even, in our last issue, discussed the premises on which such an organization must rest in order to become a stable and strong participant in the new and free Europe of the future. The joint declaration, which has recently been signed in London, is the result of negotiations conducted since November, 1940. On the whole, it conforms with our suggestions, although several of its paragraphs do not go far enough and fail to make a sufficiently bold break with certain obsolete traditions. . . ."

Other underground papers, too, published articles supporting the idea of a federation on the occasion of the signing of the above-mentioned declaration in New York. Here is an excerpt from one of these articles:

"Creating a Europe of Free Peoples.

"During the International Labor Conference in New York, the representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, and Yugoslavia published a joint declaration proclaiming their intention to establish strict economic co-operation among their countries after the war. In accordance with this agreement, the heads of the delegations of these four countries made a motion at the Conference demanding that the Central and Eastern European region be assured representation on the future planning commission.

"One more step has thus been made toward the integration of Europe, but it was a far cry from Hitler's blueprints. The future Europe, a Europe of free peoples, is casting aside its prejudice and backyard quarrels, and is planning instead for a better and more harmonious world."

But the Polish labor movement does not support a vague idea of federation—it is fighting for a specific kind of federation based on the freedom of the peoples which constitute it. Thus, in one of the underground labor papers dated February, 1942, we read:

"Almost every official and underground paper, as well as every citizen of Europe—German or Pole, Frenchman or Belgian, Croatian or Czech—today supports the slogan of a future general European federation or a federation of each country with its close neighbors.

"One of the tasks of our movement is to build the most durable foundations possible for a European federation, but this

federation, as we conceive it, differs from that advanced in a number of so-called federal theories sponsored by other political groups.

"A nation locked within its customs barriers and political boundaries, and guarded by a variety of restrictions and rows of guns, is today an anachronism, and its historic role is hopelessly a thing of the past. . . .

"The compulsory herding of nations into one empire, which is governed by the strongest national group, must therefore not be confused with a genuine federation, for the latter is a voluntary organization of free nations, a union based on political, social, and economic equality. . . .

"The moral atmosphere of the federation must be permeated by the deep conviction of its citizens that the union has not been formed to foster the imperialism—be it directed at external or internal aims—of any single nation, but to harmonize and co-ordinate the interests of all the federated nations, to eliminate war, and to facilitate and promote the cultural, physical, and material development of the population. . . ."

And the article goes on to say that the future federation must be a voluntary union, based on the equality of all the participants. It must also be organized as a federation of autonomous peoples, and not as a centralized super-state.

If the foreign policy of the underground movement centers around the idea of federation, its essential thesis in the domestic field is constitutional democracy based on parliamentarianism and extensive self-government. The earliest documents of the underground movement define as its principal objective the creation of a democratic Poland. The "Manifesto of Freedom," published in November, 1939, the third month of the occupation, in the underground labor publication *Wolnosc* (freedom) names democracy as the first point in its program:

1. The chief aim of the struggle of the Polish working masses is the reconstruction of the full political freedom and independence of Poland, and the establishment of her existence on the principles of democracy and social justice.
2. In the New Poland the decisive influence of the masses of the people on the future of the country, the influence of the peasants, the workers, and the intellectuals must be secured. The political constitution and the social and economic structure of Poland must once and for all preclude the possibility of the existence of privileged social groups which strive to seize power and economic supremacy.

3. The political constitution of Poland must be based on the principles of political democracy guaranteed by: a democratic representation of the people elected on the basis of equal, secret, universal, direct and proportional suffrage; responsibility of the government before parliament; independence of the Courts of Justice; extensive democratic self-government; freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, and of association; and personal immunity of the citizens.

Under these conditions the political and social aspirations of the working masses will find their expression in the emergence of a workers' and peasants' government, endowed with the confidence of the people and representing the interest of all working men.

The democratic regime envisaged by the Polish underground is formulated even more concretely in the above mentioned "Program of a People's Poland," published in 1941:

1. A republican and democratic constitution guaranteeing the necessary stability of the State and assuring the right of all citizens to exercise adequate influence upon the selection of the supreme authorities of the nation and upon their policies. Such influence should be exercised through a parliament, democratically elected and restored to its dignity, as well as through general referendum and the right of popular initiative.

2. Broad local self-government which would assume many of the public functions hitherto exercised by the lower organs of the central government. Local self-government should be supplemented by self-governing professional organizations, and by autonomous administration of social security agencies and of scientific institutions. Labor unions, both of manual and of professional workers, as well as management organizations and co-operative societies, while retaining a full measure of internal autonomy, will be given their definite place in the general organizational scheme of the Republic.

3. Freedom of expression, and the right to organize political, social, and cultural activities on a democratic and independent basis.

4. Equalization of opportunity for all citizens of the Republic through the establishment of universal free education and unrestricted access to culture and higher education.

5. Equal rights for all loyal citizens of the Republic regardless of religion and national origin.

The German population which settled on Polish soil—especially Germans who settled in Poland after the first partition—

in order to promote the Germanization of Poland, will be returned to Germany. The same is to apply to all who registered as *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>1</sup> Permission to remain in Poland should be granted only to those citizens of German origin who had given active proof of their devotion and loyalty to the Polish State, particularly during the present war and the Nazi occupation.

A thorough reorganization of the social system will eliminate the economic basis for the antagonisms between national groups.

The democratic constitution of Poland will, through adequate safeguards, be made secure against attempts to overthrow it.

In accordance with the old traditions of the Polish labor movement, the underground has directed a particularly sharp attack against racial discrimination. The slogan of equality for all the national minorities has been taken up vigorously and not only with regard to the future organization of Poland. On the contrary, even now, under the occupation, the labor movement is waging a struggle against anti-Semitism and appealing to the population to show solidarity with the unfortunate victims of Nazi racial persecution. The following proclamation was published by the Polish labor underground in 1940, when the Germans began building the walls of the Warsaw ghetto:

"To the Working People of Warsaw!

"The Nazi invader has added a new link to the endless chain of crimes and cruelties which he is committing in our country: that link has been forged out of the heart of the Polish capital in the shape of ignominious walls of separation—a single order has bereft thousands of people of their means of livelihood and destroyed the very basis of their existence. Four hundred thousand men, women, old people and children, reduced to the lowest level of slaves, have been shut into an area called 'The Jewish Quarter,' condemned to starvation and thrown to the mercy of the SS gangsters. History has never known such bestiality. . . .

"Reactionary movements and Nazi agents were busy preparing this propaganda a long time before the war. They created hatred and coaxed the Polish people to look for enemies everywhere but under the swastika banner. But the Polish people who have always fought against fascism and Hitlerism, who have proved their political maturity and spirit of sacrifice on

<sup>1</sup> *Volksdeutsche*: Those Polish citizens who registered as special, privileged German Nationals in Poland.

the battlegrounds are fully aware of the real Nazi aims and methods. The Polish people understand those aims and reject contemptuously the role Hitlerism offers them—the role of a privileged slave, not yet locked behind the walls of the ghetto.

“There are no grades, better or worse, in slavery. There are no privileged slaves among these who are oppressed by the brutal invader. There are only those who continue to fight and those who have yielded. . . .”

The objective of political democracy is supplemented by the objectives of economic and social democracy. However, the Polish labor movement does not advocate orthodox collectivism; instead, it favors a mixed economy. Three types of economic organizations are included in its program: (1) Private property, (2) the co-operative system and (3) collective ownership. Private property is to remain the dominant form in agriculture. In this domain, the Polish underground labor movement, like the Peasant Party, demands a radical agrarian reform and the partitioning of the large estates. According to the program of *Polska Ludowa* (People's Poland) the system of co-operatives is an essential element in the organization of agricultural economy and will enable the small farmers to work more productively; it will also play an important part in distribution, handicrafts and light industry. Private property will be maintained in medium and small industries. Socialization or state ownership is advocated mainly for the basic industries. Here are the fundamental points of the economic program of *Polska Ludowa* (People's Poland) in their original form:

1. A just redistribution of national income. Economic organization is to be changed in such a way as to raise the volume of production and the general level of economic welfare. This is the only feasible method of achieving a general improvement of the standard of living of the urban and rural working masses.

2. The realization of the ideal of social justice through the socialization of certain sectors of economic life, and through the greatest possible reduction of the inequalities of property and income within those sectors of the economy which remain unsocialized.

3. The establishment of labor as the only title to a share in national income. The abolition of exploitation.

The plan for social reconstruction and the government's economic policy must be based on the premise of the solidarity of interests of peasants, workers, and professionals. A just

method of determining and equalizing their respective shares of the national income must be evolved.

The new social order will be based essentially on the freedom, independence, and social adjustment of every individual. It will thus be truly democratic, both in its political and economic organization, and will make possible further dynamic development. In the process of nationalization, organized groups such as local communities and co-operative societies, will assume the various functions within the nationalized section of the economy. Farmers' co-operatives and consumers' co-operatives will be an important component of the future economic order and will enjoy full State support. The collectively owned public utilities will also have an important place in the future economic life of the nation.

The first part of the economy to be nationalized will comprise those industries which are connected with national defense, as well as the key industries, such as railroads and other transportation facilities, raw material extraction industries, power supplying industries (coal mines, petroleum wells, electric power plants, etc.), and steel works. Small private enterprises will be subject to control by autonomous corporations which will be established in each industry, representing the interests of workers and consumers. Artisanry will be considered a form of minor enterprise and will remain primarily in private hands. The various crafts should organize on a co-operative basis to protect and promote common interests in the purchase of raw materials, the sale of finished products, the organization of credit, and the common utilization of technical facilities. Home industries, both in cities and in rural areas, should also be organized along co-operative lines.

The great landed estates will be expropriated without compensation. Agrarian organization will rest on the basis of independent farms worked by the owners and their families. Certain of the expropriated estates, particularly those which can be operated on a high level of productive efficiency, may be converted into autonomous model farms owned by local communities, or into experimental farms and seed farms. All the technical, economic and organizational deficiencies of the small-scale farming system will be remedied by the general co-operative system, and the organization of distribution will be based on the co-operative system. The banking system will be placed under public administration. The State's exchange and financial



policy will be formulated to fulfill the needs of the developing social and economic system. Social security will be expanded both in the cities and in the countryside.

A planned economic development will determine the directions and goals of economic activities and define the parts to be played by the various elements of production and distribution. Economic life will be based upon the principle of autonomous organizations in the various branches of the economy, composed of the representatives of all participating elements, i.e., of the workers, of professionals, and of the owners of the productive units, whether industrial or agricultural, individual or collective, nationalized or co-operative. These autonomous organizations will be co-ordinated in the provinces by the Provincial Chamber of Agriculture. Nationally, they will be governed and co-ordinated by the National Chamber of Economics, which will direct and plan the general economic activities of the nation.

In the eyes of the publicists and leaders of the Polish underground labor movement, the fundamental condition for the reconstruction of a democratic Poland is a durable union of peasants, workers and intellectuals.

"The peasant cannot have any other ally than the worker, the worker cannot have any other ally than the peasant. . . . Peasants and workers have a long common road before them. . . . A peasant-worker alliance is, in political terms, an alliance between the socialists and the people's party. Their common slogans: independence, democracy and social reform, completely justify this alliance. And this political union must gather around it not only masses of peasants and workers, but also the democratic intellectuals. The place of these latter is among the peasants and workers. . . ." This quotation is from an article published in an underground paper in February, 1942.

The program of *Polska Ludowa* contains old programmatic elements of Polish socialism. Let us try to understand the point of view expressed in this program—keeping in mind that it was formulated by the representatives of the peasants and workers. Several points take on special significance, when considered in the light of actual conditions prevailing in Poland today. Polish heavy industry is today completely controlled by the German banks or incorporated into the system of the Hermann Goering Works. Many factories have been transferred from Germany to Poland, as a result of the bombardments, and these now belong

directly or indirectly to the German government-controlled concerns. When the Nazis are expelled from Poland, the taking over of all these industries, which have already been more or less nationalized, by the Polish authorities will follow as a matter of course. In this respect the program of the labor movement is dictated by practical considerations. For what else could be done with the industries transferred from Germany to Poland other than to nationalize them? Should they be returned to the Germans? Of course not, they will cover only a small portion of the damages caused by the Germans in Poland. Should they be handed over to private individuals? No, for no one individual has any legal claim on them.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that even before the war the public utilities in the cities, such as the trolley car companies, were municipal property; the Polish telephone system, telegraph, railroads, and to a large extent, the shipping, salt and tobacco industries, were nationalized. Thus the socialization of the key industries in Poland has a certain basis in the past.

By socialization, the program of *Polska Ludowa* does not necessarily mean nationalization. Throughout almost all Eastern Europe electric plants belonged to the municipalities—they were not government-owned—and were controlled by the municipal councils through special committees appointed for that purpose. This was a form of socialization, while another was the co-operative system. Actually there are many forms of socialization, but the difficulty is always to choose the form which interferes least with the freedom of the individual, the people's rights, the workings of democracy and the productive efficiency of the given enterprise.

---

## German Labor Policy in Poland

---

The German labor policy in Poland cannot be regarded as a separate problem, for it is a functional part of the German policy and Nazi ideology as a whole, not a case of individual cruelty or atrocities. In the German labor policy in general there is nothing accidental; on the contrary, every action is thoroughly prepared, well thought out, and part of a carefully designed and integrated blueprint, and is a logical sequence to Nazism. It has three main elements.

- (1) war economics
- (2) long-range Nazi planning, racial policies and other ideological premises
- (3) maintenance of political power in Germany and the occupied countries.

The manpower of the occupied countries is badly needed for carrying on Germany's war. The German army and navy are using a very large number of the most capable people in direct military service, and German industry, therefore, is experiencing a shortage of labor. On the other hand, in the present war there is a constant destruction of tools, towns, and men. The replacement of the technical implements of war requires a tremendous amount of manpower, and a good deal of this manpower must be supplied by the occupied countries, either as hands sent into Germany or indirectly by the employment of foreign workers in their native countries. The first means deportation and forced or semi-forced labor in Germany; the second means more or less compulsory labor at home and intensified exploitation.

Any method of getting the most out of the worker is considered good by the German authorities. Terrorism, long hours of work, employment of juveniles—all these are only "by-products" of this policy.

According to the long range Nazi plan, Germany is to be established as the economic and, above all, the industrial center of Europe, on which all the other countries are to be dependent. This means the taking of cheap labor, raw materials, and especially food, from the Eastern European countries; the cheap labor is to serve German industry and, according to the Nazi ideology, the German people. Other people, because of their racial inferiority, are to serve the Germans. The racial premises of the Nazi theory are here embodied in the labor policy—in the system of wages, protection, and privileges—and this labor policy is being applied in Poland. Its premises have been officially formulated, and we know them from the official German statements, as well as from the attitude of the controlled press.

Poland has been divided into two areas, and these areas are being treated differently. The western part of Poland has been incorporated into the German Reich and renamed "Wartegau." Part of the southwestern Polish provinces like Silesia and Dabrowa Basin have been incorporated into adjacent German Silesia. The remaining part is called the *Gouvernement Général* and is subjected to a special regime. After the Soviet army left eastern Poland in 1941 and the Germans occupied it, some of this territory became a part of *Gouvernement Général*, while the rest was included in the *Reichsbezirk Ukraine* and the *Reichskommissariat Ostlande*.

In this study we will deal principally with the western incorporated provinces, where the Polish element is being ruthlessly expelled and deported, and with the *Gouvernement Général*, which is regarded as a settlement for the subjugated Polish population. The illegally incorporated western part is subject to the same legislation as the Reich. The so-called *Gouvernement Général* has special laws and is subject to a different legal, political, economic and social order. In the Eastern provinces there is yet another system.

The economic and political role of the *Gouvernement Général* was authoritatively analyzed by the Governor, Dr. Hans Frank, in the course of the annual meeting of the Academy of German Law on November 22, 1940. Frank, who is president of this Academy, proclaimed "the historical importance of the law-giving mission that has fallen to the Reich in the New Europe in process of creation." This mission of Germany is to be a *Fuehrerstaat*—a Leader-nation. In speaking of the organization of the Reich, Frank defined the occupied countries

as "limitrophic elements." He spoke about "our colonies, our dependencies, and the protectorate and Gouvernement Général of Poland subject to the authority of the Reich by virtue of the Fuehrer's decrees." Then he defined the Gouvernement Général:

"The Gouvernement Général, subjected to the sovereignty of the Fuehrer, forms part of the space which is dependent upon the authority of the Reich; yet from the legal point of view this territory is not part of the Reich. The peoples living in these areas are under the protectorate of the Reich (*Schutzherrschaft*)."

The role of the Gouvernement Général in the war economy is explained in the secret Goering circular, published by the Polish Government in the "White Book." This document was issued by Field Marshal Goering, Comptroller-in-Chief of the Four Year Plan, invested with plenary powers in the Gouvernement Général of Poland. Originally, it had been issued and signed by Governor General Frank, on January 25, 1940, at Cracow Castle.

The circular recommends the following general economic policy:

"1. Because of the existing needs of the Reich, it is not possible at present for the Gouvernement Général to follow any long-term policy. On the contrary, it is essential so to direct the economic affairs of the Gouvernement Général that it will produce results in the shortest possible time, and that such results will represent the maximum that can be gotten out of the Gouvernement Général to reinforce immediately the military power of the Reich."

The labor policy is outlined in paragraphs 2 and 4:

"The following results in particular are expected from the economic efforts of the Gouvernement Général. . . .

"f. the assembling and transporting to the Reich of at least one million agricultural and industrial workers of both sexes, including about 750,000 agricultural laborers, not less than 50% of whom shall be women, so as to safeguard the continued productivity of the Reich's agriculture, and to remedy the industrial labor shortage in the Reich. . . .

"g. as regards the sending to the Reich of contingents of Polish labor, special consideration must be given to: Filling the labor needs of the Gouvernement Général. Despatching the con-

tingents as soon as possible so that the last may be sent before the end of April. Allowing the transfer of savings from wages only in the case of workers who enter the Reich as seasonal workers. . . .

"4. As regards the plan for the unification of the entire economy of the *Gouvernement Général* in order to complete the necessary tasks, it is essential that the following measures be adopted:

"a. as regards the feeding of the population, no matter what happens, persons working in war industries or in undertakings essential to the *Gouvernement Général* must retain their capacity to produce, even though during the period of shortage the rest of the population has to content itself with a minimum amount of food. . . .

"g. The regulation of prices and salaries, the stabilization of the currency, and the credit policy must all be based on the closest possible co-operation among all the competent authorities, with a view to establishing stable conditions, without which no economic organization is possible."

These documents show that the labor problem is a functional part of the whole policy of Nazism. The so-called *Gouvernement Général* is regarded by the Governor as a dependent territory, similar to a colony, and expected to be especially useful in serving the war effort. These are the two basic premises.

#### THE RACIAL ISSUE

The ideological content of the Nazi attitude toward Polish labor has been expressed by various German leaders and officials. The racial policy toward labor is also only a part of the general Nazi policy toward the whole Polish population. In addition to the eastern provinces, which were included in "Ukraine" or "Ostland" and about which our information is rather scanty, there are three "geographical" divisions, each of which receives a different treatment, (1) the *Gouvernement Général*, (2) the incorporated provinces, and (3) Germany proper. The situation gets worse from the east to the west. The basic principle is also the same—the Germans are regarded as the master race; the others, as second class human beings—and it is expressed by the chiefs of the Nazi machine as well as by the small local *Fuehrers*.

Some idea about the general attitude can be found in the instructions entitled, "For Political Guidance of the National So-

cialist Party as Regards Eastern Policy (1940)."<sup>1</sup> We read in this document:

"Nor is there place here for people who defend the thesis that all nations are equal. In relations between the German and Polish peoples, the first law is that above the Polish magnate stands the German peasant; above the Polish intellectual the German laborer, that there is no common measure between German and Poles, as that would deprive the German of his status as Master. The second law is that it is no part of the German's task to increase the cultural or economic strength of the Poles."

The leader of the *Arbeitsfront*, Dr. Ley, formulated the official labor policy in the temporarily conquered east along the same lines, in an article in the *National Zeitung* of Essen, No. 35, dated February 4, 1940:

"Each nation must fight the good fight that will give its race the right to live. An inferior race needs less food and less culture than a superior race. Never can the German man live in the same way as the Pole or the Jew."

He expressed this idea even more strongly in Cracow when he delivered a speech as Minister of the Reich and *Reichsorganisationsleiter* of the National Socialist Party, on November 9, 1940 (published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* No. 340 on November 10, 1940):

"The higher the racial quality of a nation, the higher must be its aspirations. The German must have more living space and a higher standard of living than the Pole or the Jew. If anyone should ask you by what right, your reply will be; 'by the right of self-expression'."

This racial attitude has been repeated again and again by other great and lesser Nazi leaders. On November 11, 1939, Herr Übelhör, a former mayor of the city of Mannheim said, in Lodz, "We are masters. As masters we must conduct ourselves. The Pole is a servant (*Knecht*) and must only serve." The same gentleman in a broadcast speech on December 2, 1939, repeated, "every Pole is a servant (*Knecht*) and every Pole must blindly and unhesitatingly carry out any order given to him by a German." A year later, he was speaking as the administrator of

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 184, Appendix 102.

Lodz, the greatest Polish textile center. We can read his words in the *Litzmannstadter Zeitung* of October 28, 1940:

"District President Übelhor declared that the Pole never changes: we shall never forget what he has done to us; we must make him feel that we are his masters, and that he must work for us. If he meets a German on the pavement, the Pole must step aside. As for the Jew, he must work with ever-increasing intensity, he must toil and sweat to keep himself alive."

Herr Greiser, the Gauleiter of Poznan, delivered a speech on October 28, 1940, in which he attempted to define the status of Poles in the incorporated areas. The Germans in these areas are to be regarded as real citizens. Poles are only *Schutzbefohlene* (taken under protection) protected people, and are to be regarded as having a position of second rank (*Zweitrangigkeit*).

*Regierungspresident* Jager, in trying to define the situation of the Poles in a theoretical way, speaks about *voelkische Schlechterstellung der Polen*, which means the inferior status of the Poles in regard to their nationhood.

This attitude accounts for the many limitations imposed even more stringently on the Polish population in the west than in the *Gouvernement Général*. The Pole is limited in his movements by an earlier curfew than the German. (In September, 1941, the curfew was at eight o'clock in the evening.) He is prohibited from moving freely from place to place without a special permit, from using trolley buses during the morning hours, from walking in the public parks, from using the waiting rooms at railway stations, from making long distance telephone calls, and so on. In August, 1941, in these provinces, the Germans confiscated all bicycles except those belonging to the Polish workmen, and the workman's family is not permitted to use his bicycle. Space prevents us from listing all the limitations imposed but the instances mentioned above will illustrate how far the Germans have gone. A decree of Greiser's, promulgated publicly by him in 1941, prohibits marriage for Polish men before the age of 28 and for women before the age of 25. This is effective in the incorporated provinces. In 1941 the mayor of Piotrkow, Kujawski, prohibited Polish children from going out into the streets without good reason.

This general policy had a decisive influence upon the labor policy in Poland. All legislation for and treatment of the workers is based on the division of mankind into superior and



inferior races, into privileged and non-privileged. Even in war production, this line is followed. The German war-worker receives higher pay and better food rations than the Pole.

The distinction between the Germans and the Poles in relation to labor also has a political purpose. By means of this distinction, the Germans are becoming a privileged group, being in a better situation than any of the other European peoples. The German worker is interested in maintaining his privileges in relation to other workers; and to maintain them, he must support the governing group. In this fashion, the Nazi ruling clique makes a scapegoat of the subjugated people by directing the attention of the German masses toward them, showing the German workers that they are of better stock, a kind of European nobility, and at the same time diverting their attention from other problems. It is also a method of dividing and weakening the working masses. Labor and the privileges afforded to it are divided into many national categories, of which the Germans are the most privileged. The Poles are only one of the under-privileged groups; there are peoples who are better off and others who are worse off. The Jews, above all, are in a much worse legal and actual situation, while the Lithuanians and the Ukrainians for instance are in a better one. The German authorities are doing their utmost to set one nation against another, in order to weaken and disunite them. This is the best means of destroying the basic principles of labor organization—solidarity. This general policy of the Nazis toward labor in Poland makes itself felt in all the aspects of the Polish workers' lives.

#### SOURCES

We have tried to describe the situation of the Polish workers under German occupation as objectively as we could—to the extent to which cruelty and barbarism can be objectively described. This chapter was based on the following sources: (1) German legislation,<sup>1</sup> (2) original reports of the Polish under-

---

<sup>1</sup>The main German sources on labor laws in occupied Poland are: (a) the complete collection of Reich laws and regulations concerning foreign workers published under the title: *Der Ausländische Arbeiter in Deutschland*, Vols. 1, 2, *Verlag für Wirtschaftsschriften*, Otto K. Krauskopf, Berlin. This publication deals with the legal position of foreign workers up to December 5, 1942. (b) *Arbeits-einsatz und Arbeitsrecht*, Vol. 2, edited by H. Kuppers and Dr. R. Bannier, Berlin, 1942, which deals with the legal position of these workers up to March, 1942. (c) *Reichsarbeitsblatt*.

ground, (3) the publications of the Polish Ministry for Information and Documentation, (4) materials and studies of the Polish Labor Group "Poland Fights" in New York, (5) the "International Labor Review."

The bare description of the legal status of the occupied territory does not give us an adequate picture. In the first place, legislation does not constitute an effective obstacle to all sorts of abuses and oppressions: it is only a general framework for Nazi lawlessness and cruelty. The extra-legal reality is by far more cruel than the law, which is itself an example of cruelty *sui generis*.

Moreover, the Nazis have often changed their own laws. It is, of course, impossible to trace in this work the complete development of Nazi legislation in occupied Poland, and the general picture we have given is neither exhaustive nor definitive, for our purpose was only to give a broad outline of the legal situation which is constantly changing.

I have had the privilege of using the original reports of the Polish underground, which are impressive for their exactitude and comprehensiveness. I have also been able to use the Polish underground press. This material received from Poland through underground channels has allowed me to show the real situation which is not reflected in the laws. The statistical tables on which I based my conclusions were prepared in Poland. Unfortunately, in many cases the reader will not be able to check the exactitude of the quoted facts against the original sources—for at present these sources are inaccessible. And, as I have mentioned above, the regulations concerning the use of materials originating in underground publications have prevented me from quoting the names of the newspapers (except in a few cases); all I could indicate was the exact date of each publication quoted.

---

The most important laws and regulations were published in the form of appendices in "The Polish White Book," Republic of Poland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Occupation of Poland, Greystone, Roj, New York, 1942, and in "The Polish Black Book," G. B. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1942.

An excellent and short account is presented in the "Polish Fortnightly Review," published by the Polish Ministry of Information No. 65, London, April 1, 1942, "Polish Workers in Germany." This issue is entirely based on the three German sources mentioned above.

## Wages and Cost of Living

### THE LEGAL STATUS

The basic policy of the German authorities concerning wages was to freeze them and to make distinctions between Poles and Germans in the salary schedules. In this field, too, there is a difference between the Gouvernement Général and the incorporated areas, and the general policy and the legal situation is, consequently, different.

In the Gouvernement Général, the conditions of labor were fixed according to the decree of October 31, 1939.<sup>1</sup> In principle all wages were fixed. According to this ordinance, all collective agreements concerning workers and employers in force on August 31, 1941, remained in force and were binding upon all parties concerned. Any changes in wage scales or salaries were prohibited unless they received the approval in writing of the District Commander. Wages were obviously frozen in all branches of industry.

The situation is different in the incorporated areas. The situation of the Polish workers was regulated by an order dated October 5, 1941,<sup>2</sup> the basic principles of which are as follows. A Polish worker has no rights in respect to labor protection; however, employers are permitted to grant the Polish workers certain legal privileges applicable to German workers, although on the other hand, employers are prohibited, under severe pen-

<sup>1</sup> VBI. GG. BG. 1939, p. 13. The enactments and proclamations relating to the territories illegally incorporated in the Reich were published in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* (RGBl). The enactments and proclamations relating to the Gouvernement Général were published in the *Verordnungsblatt für die Besetzten Polnische Gebiete* (VBI. BG) issued in Berlin, later issued as the *Verordnungsblatt des General Gouverneurs für die Besetzten Polnische Gebiete* (VBI. GG. BG) that afterwards became the *Verordnungsblatt des Gouvernements Polen* (VBI. GGF). See "German Occupation of Poland," Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 1941, No. 29, Part I, 448. The ordinance, as well as an official commentary to it, was discussed in the "International Labor Review," Vol. 40, No. 4, April, 1942.

alties, from allowing a number of specified privileges to the Polish workers. Concerning wages, according to this order the Poles can, in principle, get only the minimum rate for any particular kind of work, nor may family and children allowances be paid to Polish employees. The Pole is entitled to remuneration only in return for work actually performed, so that, for instance, a Polish worker absent from work owing to illness cannot receive any reimbursement. As a matter of grace, he can get his wages for the time lost in connection with his official obligations, or if he has to undergo a medical examination as a result of an industrial accident that was not his own fault.

The commentary to the ordinance was supplied in an article by *Oberregierungsrat* H. Kuppers, published in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*.<sup>1</sup> This commentary helps us understand to what extent the limitations discussed above are applied to Polish workers. Herr Kuppers tries also to justify this treatment of Polish labor. He explains:

"The profound hostility of the Polish race, manifested in innumerable excesses and atrocities, made it impossible for Poles to be treated on a footing of equality with Germans. On the contrary, it was necessary that we make every effort to ensure that the Pole be clearly placed in a situation of inferiority as compared with members of the German race. Only by this means was it possible to prevent the distance that must be maintained between the German people and the Poles from being narrowed down."

The promulgation of this ordinance presented the German press in Poland with an opportunity to instigate hostility toward the Poles in order to humiliate them still further. The *Ost-deutscher Beobachter*, issued in Poznan, in an article published on December 19, 1941, attempts to justify the law by writing about the "notorious laziness of the Poles and the lack of real efficiency of Polish labor and their tendency to shirk." But in reality, because of the deductions and cruel application of the law, the situation of the Poles was made much more unfavorable. A Polish underground paper of January 29, 1942, informs us that according to this ordinance, the maximum rate for the Poles is certainly far below 80% of the scale set for the Germans.

<sup>1</sup> A summary of this article published in the *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 1941, No. 30, is to be found in the "International Labor Review," Vol. 40, No. 4, April, 1942.

The deductions for special taxes, insurances and *Arbeitsfront* for the Poles amount to 33% of their salary, whereas these deductions do not exceed 10% for the Germans.

In March and April of 1942, according to our information from occupied Poland, a further series of decreases in wages was introduced in order to intensify the racial differentiation of the workers employed within the Reich. This time, labor was divided on a territorial, rather than on a national basis. The rate of the wages increased from east to west, and upon this basis, four groups were formed: (1) the Germans, (2) workers from Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania who work under the same conditions as the Germans, with the difference that the differential tax is deducted from their wages (*Sozialausgleichsabgabe*), (3) workers from the Gouvernement Général and the district of Bialystok who are subject, regardless of their nationality, to the known regulations for the Poles already mentioned (payment only for work actually performed, no additional payments, etc.), (4) workers from the remaining eastern territories, among whom there may also be a considerable number of Poles, who are in the worst situation, and are subject to excessively high taxes.

These regulations were drawn up for the workers employed in the Reich, but they are certainly applied also to the workers employed in the incorporated areas of Poland and probably at times in the Gouvernement Général.<sup>1</sup>

The special laws concerning the underprivileged status of Poles in the incorporated areas has a very distinct political purpose, over and above the carrying out of the general policy of racial discrimination. This purpose is to force the Poles to register as *Volksdeutsche*, as belonging to the German nation, for, in this way, a Pole declares himself a German national and resigns his Polish nationality. On March 13, 1941, by a regulation of the Reich Minister for Internal Affairs, this national register was established for the incorporated areas and *Deutschevolks* lists were drawn up for these areas.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, we were unable to get information as to how far the above mentioned regulations are applied in the Gouvernement Général.

<sup>2</sup> The *Volksliste* was introduced as early as September, 1939, in the Wartegau region. It divided the candidates for Germanism into four categories:

1. Germans who lived in Poland but stressed their German origin by belonging to German organizations.

2. Germans who were not in organizations but who remained faithful to Germany in their behavior.

## THE WAGES AND FOOD SITUATION

According to the regulations in effect all over Poland, a very real differentiation between Poles and Germans is being made. The Poles have much lower salaries than the Germans, as we have pointed out, and the comparative table of wages issued in the Journal of Decrees of the Gouvernement Général on February 1, 1940, exemplifies this (see Table VIII).

But the wages are not so important as the allotment of food; the ration cards have higher values for Germans. There are also

3. Those of German origin who associated themselves with Polish culture.
4. Those who were Germans by blood, but who regarded themselves as Poles. Special regulations were made for intermarriages, etc.

The Decree of March 13, 1941, enlarged the range of people eligible:

"All persons are to be included in the nationality register who are of German origin (*deutsch-stammig*)"—if their parents were of German blood. Categories 1 and 2 were joined into one group, and now there were three main groups: group 1, which was identified by blue cards, group 2, identified by green cards, and group 3, identified by red cards.

On September 14, 1941, in Poznan, those who could prove documentarily that they were of German origin were permitted to apply to be placed on the register. The categories were broken down in this fashion:

1. Those Polish citizens who declared themselves German and who took an active part in German activities. These were known as "Activists," and also included those Germans who did not take an active part in German activities. Actually, they consisted of the German minority in Poland.

2. Persons of German origin who, for various reasons, had associated themselves with Poles until the outbreak of the war.

3. Persons of German blood who adopted the Polish attitude. Although they were "traitors to German Blood," they were still Germans and must be taken into the nation. Children of mixed marriages were also included, but these were most difficult to trace and special investigation commissions were set up.

In Silesia, which was an important industrial region for the Germans, these categories were not enforced, as the needs of this region necessitated treating the problem in a much more liberal manner. This was also true in Polish Pomerania.

The Poles were encouraged to declare themselves Germans. The Gauleiter for Polish Pomerania, Forster, wrote several articles in a number of journals (e.g., *Die National Zeitung* of May 24, 1941) in which he declared that this register was designed to facilitate the return to Germany of all those who "had been overwhelmed and lost because of Polish pressure in the course of centuries." A special commission decides with the utmost liberalism as to who should be included among those applying. This encouragement given to Poles to place themselves on the German national register and the press campaign justifying the "privilege" of enlisting are being intensified. Ideologically, it has been justified by the Nazis with the explanation that the German element has infiltrated into this so-called civilization throughout history, so that now it is difficult to distinguish between Germans and non-Germans.

This enlistment is also helpful in recruiting for the German army Poles who belong to the families on the register. The labor policy concerning Poles in the incorporated areas must be regarded, too, as one of the instruments which serve this aim.

TABLE VIII

SALARIES OF POLISH WORKERS AND GERMAN WORKERS PER HOUR ACCORDING TO THE DECREE OF THE GOVN. GEN. OF FEBRUARY 1, 1940

	<i>Rates per hour</i>	
	<i>Germans in Zlotys</i>	<i>Poles in Zlotys</i>
Unskilled workers:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	1.16	0.58
Elsewhere . . . . .	1. -1.68	0.50
Trained workers:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	1.22	0.72
Elsewhere . . . . .	1.05-1.13	0.62
Skilled workers:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	1.30	1.02
Elsewhere . . . . .	1.20-1.30	0.88
Overseers and Foremen:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	1.62	1.16
Elsewhere . . . . .	1.40-1.52	1.
Women workers:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	0.87	0.48
Elsewhere . . . . .	0.75-0.84	0.40

#### MONTHLY SALARIES OF EMPLOYEES

Employees carrying out ordinary routine duties:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	382	195
Elsewhere . . . . .	303	170
Employees engaged in ordinary commercial or technical duties:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	386-502	300
Elsewhere . . . . .	347-463	260
Employees in commercial and technical executive positions:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	647-828	402
Elsewhere . . . . .	593-748	350
Highly qualified intellectual workers in similar positions but with completed higher education:		
in Warsaw and Cracow . . . . .	1,136-1,468	483
Elsewhere . . . . .	854-1,172	420

special stores which may be patronized only by Germans where food of much better quality is available, whereas Poles very often, in spite of having ration cards, cannot get any merchandise because of the shortage. An announcement of the town council in Lodz (renamed Litzmannstadt) dated April 23, 1940, in regard to the allotment of foodstuffs for the period from April 29 to May 5, 1940, gives us an idea of the technique whereby the Nazis apply their ideology to the problem of feeding the population. This announcement states the amounts allotted to the Poles (green ration cards) and the Germans (red ration cards):

TABLE IX

ALLOTMENT OF FOOD IN LODZ, APRIL 29-MAY 5, 1940

<i>Germans Receive:</i>	<i>Poles Receive:</i>
100 grams marmalade	50 grams marmalade
100 grams peas	100 grams peas
50 grams rice	none
10 grams tea	none
250 grams artificial honey	250 grams artificial honey
2 lemons	1 lemon
187.5 grams butter	62.5 grams butter
	62.5 grams margarine

Such announcements are published regularly every week.

In general, the situation of the Polish workers is much worse than that of the German workers. Wage figures give no real idea of it, because the key to the problem is the food and commodity prices. Wages have not increased essentially; on the contrary, with the exception of Warsaw, the German authorities have lowered the wage level, especially that of the intellectual workers, so that until the second half of 1941 it stood below that of 1939. The rise in wages during the second half of 1941 should be noted, but it is a very insignificant one in comparison with the rise in food prices. The rise was higher in Warsaw, but there the prices of commodities were much higher. In this respect workers were even worse off in public enterprises (for instance, the Warsaw Municipality), where the frozen wages were more difficult to raise and the wage-scale was much more stable than in free enterprises. The low salary policy is particularly marked in relation to white collar employees and intellectual workers whose salaries have been lowered even more than those of the workers.

This is a special and additional German policy. The German administration desires above all to destroy the Polish intelligentsia and thus prevent the rise of new leaders. The well-known deportation to the concentration camps of all the professors of the University of Cracow was one example of this, perhaps the best known. Another method adopted by the Germans is to incite the Polish workers and peasants against the Polish intellectuals by attempting to prove to the workers that the intellectuals are responsible for the war, and that they (the workers) were exploited by the intelligentsia. Governor-Gen-



eral Frank, in his proclamation dated October 26, 1939, had already written about the liberation "from the constraint exercised by the adventurist policy of the Polish intellectual governing class," and promised general protection for the people, especially for the workers. The lowering of the wages of the salaried employees was supposed to show the common people, *ad oculos*, that they had been exploited and that now equality had been introduced by the German authorities. It has also a special political significance, namely, the destruction of the solidarity among the intellectuals, workers and peasants.

Wages in comparison with commodity prices are catastrophically low for the entire population. The prices of food on the free "black" market are obviously several times higher than those on the ration cards, but the food allotted on the ration cards, especially in the Gouvernement Général, is absolutely

TABLE X

FOOD RATIONING PER ONE PERSON IN WARSAW IN 1941<sup>1</sup>

		<i>a. Adults</i>											
		<i>Months: I</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>VI</i>	<i>VII</i>	<i>VIII</i>	<i>IX</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>XI</i>	<i>XII</i>		
Rye Bread.....	kg	6.0	4.05	4.20	6.75	4.90	4.55	4.32	5.95	6.03	6.95		
Wheat Bread.....	"	..	0.70	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Wheat Flour.....	"	0.4	..	0.4	0.4	..	..	..	..	..	0.8		
Oat Flour.....	"	..	..	..	..	0.2	0.4	0.4	..	..	..		
Macaroni.....	"	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Buckwheat.....	"	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Sugar.....	"	0.4	1.	0.4	0.5	1.8	0.8	..	..	0.8	0.5		
Meat.....	"	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.385	0.5	0.12	0.4	1.	0.5		
Coffee Substitute.....	"	..	0.16	0.05	..	..	..	0.08	0.05	..	0.175		
Potatoes.....	"	..	5.	..	..	..	..	..	30	30	..		
Marmalade.....	"	..	..	..	0.4	..	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.24		
Melted Butter.....	"	..	..	..	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	..	0.1		
Candy.....	"	..	..	..	0.04	0.03	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15	0.15		
Eggs.....	No.	2	3	3	1	4	1	3	2	..	7		

  

		<i>b. Children</i>											
Rye Bread.....	kg	3.5	2.45	2.08	4.35	3.15	3.15	3.1	4.55	4.55	5.55		
Wheat Bread.....	"	..	0.525	0.4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Wheat Flour.....	"	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	..	..	..	..	0.4	1.3		
Oat Flour.....	"	..	..	..	..	1.2	0.9	0.4	..	..	..		
Macaroni.....	"	0.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Buckwheat.....	"	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Sugar.....	"	0.4	1.	0.4	0.5	1.8	0.8	..	..	0.8	0.5		
Meat.....	"	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.375	0.5	0.12	0.4	1.	0.5		
Coffee Substitute.....	"	..	0.05	..	..	..	..	0.08	0.05	..	0.175		
Potatoes.....	"	..	5.	..	..	..	..	..	30	30	..		
Marmalade.....	"	..	..	..	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.24		
Candy.....	"	..	..	..	0.04	0.03	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15	0.15		
Melted Butter.....	"	..	..	..	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	..	0.1		
Biscuits.....	"	..	..	..	..	..	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2		
Eggs.....	No.	2	3	3	1	4	2	3	2	..	7		

Source: Polish Official Underground Report.

insufficient for survival. The table of food rations in Warsaw shows the official allotments.

Very often, the population cannot get the articles indicated on the ration cards because of the lack of stock. Some commodities are seldom available in the legitimate stores, often those indispensable for keeping human beings alive and working, such as fats. We read in a Polish underground paper published February 22, 1942, a just criticism of the German rationing system:

"As far as food is concerned the official system would make some sense if the allotments were sufficient to keep a man alive, but they have nothing in common with the necessities of the population, for example: no fats are allowed, consequently the population is compelled to buy food at any price, and if it does not, face starvation. The food market is regularly pilfered by the Nazis who impose quotas destined largely for Germans and for shipments to the Reich. (Dairy products and poultry, for instance, are destined only for German use.) The lack of merchandise causes a continuous rise in prices."

The rationing system does not cover the basic needs of the worker's family, so that he is compelled to buy food on the black market and does so as far as his means allow. The prices of food on the black market unfortunately far exceed his ability to pay. The table of the food and basic commodity prices on the black market in Warsaw shows the tremendous rise in the price of food products, and on the other hand, the rates on the black stock exchange in Warsaw proves that the currency has been completely depreciated (see Table XI).

Here we have an economic situation which creates an unusual discrepancy between purchasing power and nominal wages, between the wages per hour and the total cost of living in comparison with pre-war conditions.

The situation regarding fuel and clothing was similar, or even worse.

As we have said before, there are also non-economic elements which affected the distribution and rationing of food. It is hard to get food on ration cards, but vodka (whiskey), on the other hand, is sold without any rationing. The aim of this is clear when one considers it in connection with the other methods used by the Germans to demoralize the Polish population as, for instance, a monopoly gambling house in Warsaw, owned by the

TABLE XI  
LIVING CONDITIONS OF POLES IN WARSAW<sup>1</sup>

Description	1938	1942				1943				
		Yearly Averages				Monthly Averages				
		1940	1941	1942	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
FOOD CONDITIONS										
(a) average daily food rations allotted per person										
Nutritive value in grams: proteins.....	*1	12	13	11	16	15	14	12	16	8
fats.....	*1	1.2	3.4	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.3	1.0	1.5
carbohydrates.	*1	165	140	125	175	180	175	135	80	85
Fuel value in calories.....	*1	735	670	575	805	800	785	625	365	385
(b) average monthly food rations allotted per person										
Bread (in grams).....	*2	6770	5570	4770	4200	4200	4200	4200	4200	4200
Flour ".....	*2	340	370	390	400	400	400	400	400	400
Sugar ".....	*2	735	590	205	—	200	200	200	200	200
Meat ".....	*2	135	455	350	400	300	—	—	—	200
Potatoes ".....	*2	5200	5500	6100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eggs <sup>5</sup> ".....	*2	1.6	3.2	2.1	—	—	6	4	2	4
(c) prices on black market <sup>3</sup>										
Brown rye bread (in zlotys per kg.).....	0.28	1.70	6.80	9.80	10.35	11.10	11.35	12.05	13.00	14.50
White wheat flour ".....	0.49	4.60	15.30	24.00	27.00	28.40	29.20	33.60	40.20	41.90
Potatoes ".....	0.10	0.80	2.30	2.90	2.35	2.45	2.55	2.70	3.35	3.60
Milk <sup>6</sup> ".....	0.34	1.60	3.10	7.00	10.60	12.10	12.30	12.80	13.60	14.20
Butter ".....	2.95	21.00	43.00	112.00	160.00	170.00	179.00	199.00	247.00	275.00
Beef ".....	1.50	8.50	15.50	33.00	43.00	53.00	62.00	65.00	79.00	97.00
Lard (leaf) ".....	1.60	16.50	38.00	105.00	153.00	154.00	170.00	198.00	238.00	243.00
Sugar ".....	1.00	6.50	18.00	54.00	66.00	66.00	72.00	87.00	104.00	105.00
Salt ".....	0.32	1.00	0.70	2.60	3.70	3.80	3.90	4.20	4.00	4.25
Coal (in zlotys per 100 kg.).....	5.00	32.00	104.00	138.00	177.00	185.00	192.00	176.00	145.00	145.00
Leather soles (in zlotys per pair).....	4.50	39.00	62.00	148.00	196.00	220.00	260.00	290.00	305.00	320.00
Soap, pre-war quality (in zlotys per cake) 1.40		38.00	65.00	128.00	180.00	214.00	216.00	221.00	286.00	258.00

# INDEX OF COST OF LIVING (1938 = 100)

General Index.....	100	420	950	1890	2360	2640	2780	2930	3560	3740
Foodstuffs.....	100	540	1290	2680	3380	3660	3920	4120	5110	5330
Heat and Light.....	100	440	1340	1830	2370	2400	2490	2890	2500	2390
Shoes.....	100	520	1710	2450	2970	3560	3800	4260	5080	5860

## INDEX OF NOMINAL MONTHLY WAGES OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (1938 = 100)

Wages of manual workers.....	100	97	97	140	133	133	133	133	•	
Wages of white collar workers.....	100	77	77	94	92	92	92	92	92	

### Remarks:

1. The nutritional and caloric values of the average workers' daily consumption during the last pre-war years have been estimated as follows on the basis of the Warsaw wage-earners' family budgets:

Nutritive value in grams:	
proteins.....	70
fats.....	68
carbohydrates.....	503
Fuel value in calories:	2992

2. The average workers' monthly consumption of standard foodstuffs has been estimated as follows on the basis of the Warsaw wage-earners' family budgets:

	in grams
Bread.....	13,900
Flour.....	1,900
Sugar.....	2,100
Meat.....	3,700
Potatoes.....	18,300
Eggs (1 egg = 50 gr.).....	310

Moreover, the average individual's monthly consumption included approximately 20,100 grams of various foods such as tolls, cakes, grits, rice, peas, beans, other vegetables, butter and other fats, cheese, cream, fruit and processed fruit; this figure includes 10 liters of milk

(1 liter = ca. 1 qt. = 1 kg.). In addition, several other varieties of foodstuffs were consumed which are not specifically mentioned in the wage-earners' family budgets.

3. There was no black market in 1938. The prices indicated for 1938 are prices on a free market.

4. The index given in the table includes both rationed foods and those purchased on the black market. The composition of the diet and the relative proportions of the various foods have been given in accordance with the pre-war norms used in the compilation of the cost-of-living index. Index calculated on the basis of prices in nominal currency.

5. One egg = approx. 50 gr.

6. One liter of milk = approx. 1 kg.

### Explanation of Symbols:

Dot (•) indicates that no data or no reliable data was available.

Dash (—) indicates that the facts in question did not exist during the period specified.

Asterisk (\*) indicates that the phenomenon dealt with could not exist during the specified period (e.g., no rations can be indicated for pre-war times, since the market at that time was free).

### Note on Currency and Weights:

1 kilogram (kg) = 1000 grams = 2.205 lbs. (approx. 2 lbs. 3 oz.)

1 zloty is equivalent approx. 20½ (pre-war exchange rate: \$1.00 = 5.30 zlotys)

<sup>1</sup> This table was prepared by the research staff of the Polish Labor Group, "Poland Fights," on the basis of reports from the research group of the Polish underground.

German government, from which Germans are prohibited.<sup>1</sup>

Vodka is sold everywhere, even in factories, which is a striking fact when one considers the lack of necessary food. An underground paper of May 3, 1941, comments as follows on this fact:

"There is a lack of potatoes, bread, sugar, and buckwheat (cereals) but there is no shortage of vodka. Every third store in Warsaw sells vodka. The same is true in Cracow, Lublin, and Kielce. Vodka is the only product the Poles can obtain in abundance. And that is the only product whose sale is encouraged by the occupant. The increasing number of stores which sell vodka is not the only element in the picture. In every factory, at all contracting enterprises, and public institutions under German management, vodka is distributed among the Polish workers in large quantities, often 2 to 3 liters monthly per person. The maintenance of the monopoly price of vodka is supposed to express toward the Poles, the good will of which everyone is aware!—they can get all the vodka they want!

"This fact deserves public attention. It is not accidental that particularly in the production and distribution of vodka, the Germans show unusual energy. There may not be any necessary articles, the supply of milk and bread may be cut off, the price of potatoes may rise fantastically, yet these same potatoes are delivered to the city to be sent to the brewery and transformed into vodka. This gives the occupant double results; the income from the vodka monopoly and a narcotic for the people which dopes them, turns their attention away from politics and social issues and makes them accept the fate of slaves.

"This is a tested method. For these same purposes the people of Czarist Russia were encouraged into drunkenness. This is the line of action which the German occupant has chosen.

"We are flooded with alcohol. The occupant is attaining his aim completely. We drink more and more. More and more frequently vodka is our companion when we gather together; more and more often the citizen drowns his worries in a fog of vodka. This state of depression which has to be drowned in vodka, and the need of excitement is the result, in most cases, of exorbitant drinking. This is not a good reason and it does not excuse in any way the growing drunkenness; on the contrary, the monstrous situation in which we now find ourselves demands from us continuous, sober alertness as well as action against the enemy and frustration of their plans in every respect.

<sup>1</sup> A special corporation was created under the title "Casino G.M.B.H." on October 24, 1940, under Article 3, Part 1, of the ordinance on gambling, of August 31, 1940.

"Drunkness is very useful for the enemy; it helps them considerably. Our unhappy frame of mind will be with us until the moment of our liberation and our hearts should be molded by faith in the future and by the desire to increase the social consciousness which is so important in connection with our future role as creators of a new life. Vodka finally destroys the spiritual strength of the masses and of the individual and their ability to win social benefits."

We can realize how frightful is the starvation in Poland if we remember that the great majority of salaries in reality amount to only a fraction of the pre-war purchasing power and that "one can get with the rationing cards, one-fourth of what used to be distributed to the convicts in the Polish state prisons"—according to an underground paper of June 20, 1941.

The attitude of the German authorities is probably not consistent. They must at any rate be interested in maintaining the efficiency even of slaves. Nevertheless, one sometimes has the impression that their political aim of destroying the population is even more important to some of the Nazis than the economic issue. This attitude is revealed by an underground paper of June 20, 1941, in which we read:

"Today, when some of the Polish enterprises increased wages, they were obliged by the German authorities to lower them to their former level, because the price of bread on the cards did not change. When a delegation of Polish workers called on a high official in order to explain to him that it is impossible for the workers to feed themselves and their families on the small wages they receive considering the tremendous increase in prices, this official, a German, replied calmly, 'I admit that for free people it is insufficient, but for slaves it is too much!'"

## The End of Polish Labor Legislation

In order to carry out their policy of getting the utmost out of occupied Poland regardless of cost, the German authorities virtually abolished all the Polish legislation which served to protect the worker. This job was done thoroughly; the eight-hour day was prolonged, the workers' holidays shortened, child labor introduced, and social insurances limited to the minimum.

### THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY AND WORKERS' HOLIDAYS

The eight-hour day in *Gouvernement Général* was abolished by a regulation published in a special number of the *Amtlicher Anzeiger für das Gouvernement Général* issued on July 23, 1941, and effective that August. By virtue of this law, the hours of labor have been established at sixty hours a week, supposedly because of industrial necessity.

In the *Gouvernement Général*, the regulations issued to implement the decree of October 31, 1939, providing workers' holidays, are unfavorable to labor. The *Verordnungsblatt für das Gouvernement Général* No. 10, February 28, 1941, provides that the director of an enterprise may grant workers not more than a six-day holiday a year. This is an express violation of the Polish law which provides that a worker has an absolute right to an eight-day paid holiday a year during the second and third years of his employment, and two weeks after three years of employment. In the so-called incorporated provinces, in view of the order of October 5, 1941, Poles, like other workers, are in principle entitled to holidays (except those employed in agriculture) "It would, however, be unjustifiable," says a German commentator, "to allow fully from the existing provisions in respect to holidays."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "International Labor Review," Vol. XLV, No. 4, April, 1942, p. 438.

## CHILD LABOR

The principle of Polish labor law that children under the age of 15 must not be employed was violated by an "ordinance of December 14, 1931, Governing Forced Labor by the Polish Population of the Gouvernement Général," which says that district commanders are authorized to extend forced labor in the Gouvernement Général to Polish youths between 14 and 18 years of age, while a Regulation of December 12, 1939, subjected Jewish youth from the age of 14 upward to forced labor, and imposed compulsory registration of all male children from the age of twelve upward.

In connection with these enactments, a Regulation of May 14, 1941 (*Amtlicher Anzeiger*, No. 33, 1941) announced the: "*Die Arbeitspflicht für die nichtdeutsche Bewohner des Distrikts Krakau wird auf Jugendliche zwischen 14 und 18 Lebensjahren ausgedehnt.*" (The labor obligations of non-German inhabitants of the Cracow district are to be extended to youths between the ages of 14 and 18.) A similar regulation affecting Polish youth in the Warsaw region (*Amtlicher Anzeiger*, No. 36 dated June 27, 1941) and a number of similar regulations both in the Gouvernement Général and in unincorporated areas, together with countless cases of the application of forced labor to children even from 12 upward, could not be mentioned here.

In the so-called incorporated areas, the already quoted decree of October 5, 1941, is applied. Herr Kupperts has commented on this law as follows:

"There is no need to extend this special protection afforded to German juveniles by the Juvenile Workers' Protection Act to Polish employees. The Polish youth from 14 to 18 years of age in respect of hours of work are subject to the consolidated Hours of Work Order of April 30, 1938, and to the remaining provisions concerning the hours of work of adult workers. They have no privileges granted to the German youth by the Workers' Protection Act of April 30, 1938."

He states further that:

"In so far as the application of these provisions may jeopardize the application of protective legislation to a member of the German race, or other German interests, the Department of Labor Inspection may impose restrictions upon the employment of Poles from 14 to 18 years of age, in accordance with the Juvenile Workers' Protection Act."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "International Labor Review," Vol. XLV, No. 4, April, 1942, p. 439.



ARBITRATION COMMISSIONS, LABOR COURTS, AND  
LABOR INSPECTIONS

By a regulation published in the V.B.G.G. No. 60, of July 9, 1941, the powers of the Arbitration Commissions existing under Polish Law for the settlement of agricultural labor conflicts have been abolished, and their powers transferred to German district commanders, thus expressly repealing the Polish law of August 1, 1919, the law of July 18, 1924, and the regulations pertaining thereto. These Polish arbitration commissions were composed of representatives of agricultural employers and employees, and held their meetings in public, in accordance with the principles of court procedure.

The labor courts which existed in Poland to decide labor disputes *between employers and employees* were abolished in the Gouvernement Général by a decree of the Polish judicature dated February 19, 1940, VBL. GG. BG. 1. p. 68. In the incorporated area, they were abolished in favor of the German labor courts.

## SOCIAL INSURANCES

In pre-war Poland, social insurance was thoroughly organized and was very extensive. Although nine years before the outbreak of the war the democratic self-government of social insurances was virtually abolished for political reasons, the whole of social insurances, based in some provinces (for instance in the southern part, formerly under Austrian occupation) on a relatively old tradition, and thoroughly built up by the workers, could not be changed. The basic privileges and structure remained, in spite of the colonels' attacks, and although in comparison with the years before the situation worsened in 1930, the sickness insurance did not lose its essential character of progressive legislation.

The German regulations have jeopardized the Polish system of social insurance. As in all fields, this situation is different in the so-called Gouvernement Général and in the so-called incorporated areas.

After the occupation, the Germans limited the benefits considerably. Instead of sickness benefits and accident insurance, the Poles received cash allowances on a reduced scale as compared with pre-war rates. Under Polish law, a 10% incapacity

for work as the result of accidents entitled the victim to corresponding benefits, whereas under the German regulation, the disability must be at least 20%. Insured workers who are "members of the German nation" receive full legal benefits. The sickness and maternity allowances have also been greatly restricted (for instance, as far as dental aid is concerned). Under German rule, only a wife and legitimate or adopted children are regarded as members of the family and entitled to allowances, whereas under Polish law, grandchildren and illegitimate children were entitled to benefits. None of these limitations apply to the Germans. They enjoy all the privileges allowed them by the German law. Once again we see the basic policy of the Germans, in regard to labor questions.<sup>1</sup>

In the illegally incorporated western provinces, a German ordinance on social insurances was introduced on January 1, 1942. According to this ordinance, the Poles must pay certain prescribed sums and benefits, for Poles must be regulated separately. The Poles employed in the Reich are subject to all kinds of compulsory insurance under the German law, but with very important limitations:

(1) The health insurance does not grant any medical aid to the family which has remained in the home country. Most other foreign workers have this right.

(2) The so-called disability insurance does not apply to foreign laborers.<sup>2</sup>

As regards unemployment insurance, according to the ordinance of November 9, 1940 (VG.BB No. 84/40, November 20, 1940), this assistance was made subject to new regulations. Any person who is capable of work but is involuntarily unemployed, or who can prove his readiness to work in a previous place of employment, but is at present in a state of need, is entitled to an

<sup>1</sup> On May 11, 1943, the occupying authorities issued a new decree dealing with social insurance (VBL. GG. 1943, p. 215, *Verordnung über die Sozialversicherungen in Général Gouvernement*). This decree has simplified the administration of social insurance and introduced sickness insurance. In actual fact nothing was changed. Max Goerlich in an article entitled *Neuerungen in der Sozialversicherung des Général Gouvernements* (published in the official *Amtliche Nachrichten für Reichsversicherung*, Berlin, August 15, 1943) states that "limitations were imposed upon the social insurance system in Poland in the first period." The great discrepancy between legislation and reality, which is one of the most characteristic features of the German rule in occupied territories, must always be kept in mind.

<sup>2</sup> "International Labor Review," Vol. XLIV, p. 325.

allowance. Jews are excluded from the scope of this order. The rates of the allowance are 25% higher for workers belonging to the German nation (*Deutsche Volkszugehoerige*), than for other workers.<sup>1</sup>

In reality, the Poles have no legal claims whatever to assistance; they may receive it only in most exceptional cases, since unemployed persons, as a rule, are sent to forced labor in Germany. Polish state and local government pensioners, however, if they can prove membership in the German nation, receive their full pensions plus 20% (Paragraph 2 Part 2 of the ordinance of April 11, 1940). Poles, on the other hand, receive no pensions, but are given allowances amounting to a fixed fraction of their former pensions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. Dobberack in an article "*Die Einfuehrung der Reichsversicherung in den Ostgebieten*," *Amtliche Nachrichten fuer Reichsversicherung*, Berlin, January 25, 1942, admits brutally that the right of social security according to paragraph 1 of the decree of December 22, 1941 (*Die Verordnung ueber die Einfuehrung der Reichsversicherung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten vom Dezember 22, 1941*), does not apply to the Poles. (*Schutzangehoerige und Staatenlose polnischen Volkstums*.)

## Forced Labor

The most characteristic mark of the Nazi labor policy is the introduction of compulsory labor into occupied Poland. The already quoted circular of Marshal Goering, issued immediately after the occupation of Poland, has shown the basic outlines of German policy in this matter.

Compulsory labor has for the Nazis the following main purposes:

1. Above all it provides German industry, especially German war industry, with cheap labor in accordance with the general Nazi policy.
2. It subjugates the Poles in a political sense, for the recruiting for compulsory labor is a cruel, but efficient means of controlling the most vital section of the population.
3. It effects a decrease in the birth rate by separating the male and female population.

### LEGAL STATUS

On October 26, 1939, three and a half weeks after the beginning of the war, and the day on which the *Gouvernement Général* was created, two regulations were issued, the first, the "Ordinance Governing Compulsory Labor of the Polish Population of the *Gouvernement Général*" (VBL. GG. BG., 1939, p. 6) and the second, "an Ordinance Governing Compulsory Labor for the Jewish Population of the *Gouvernement Général*" (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 231).<sup>1</sup>

According to these decrees, the entire Polish population from 18 to 60 years of age must perform work of public value, which includes all work on farms, the construction and maintenance of

<sup>1</sup> The first one was amended on December 14, 1939 (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 224) and the second supplemented on December 11 and 12, 1939 (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 231 and p. 246).

public buildings, the making of roads, waterways and railroads, the regulation of rivers, and all work connected with the improvement of agriculture.<sup>1</sup> Wages of persons subjected to compulsory labor shall be fixed according to an equitable scale, and the decree further states that protection should be granted as far as possible. This statement is rather propagandistic—the law speaks very generally about protection, but does not specify the rights of a forced laborer. In practice no special protection is given to the worker by the German authorities, on the contrary, the workers are completely dependent on the Nazi administration; and the benefits of labor legislation, as has already been shown, are granted to them in a most limited way—only as much as is necessary to keep them working. In the execution of the regulation instituting universal labor, all unemployed men were registered in November, 1939. In February, 1940, a register of women capable of work was drawn up in Warsaw. In the same month (February 22) a regulation was issued restricting the right to change one's place of employment. In May, 1940, youths born between 1915 and 1924 were called to employment bureaus so that their capacity for work might be determined.

In December, 1940, a decree of the Governor-General was issued introducing the so-called *Baudienst*—compulsory construction work (VBL. GG. GB., 1939, p. 69). This law, separately imposed on Ukrainians and mountaineers,<sup>2</sup> further restricts the freedom of the Poles. The lack of any limitation on the duration of the employment based on this decree makes it possible to use unpaid manpower to a large extent. Simultaneously, on December 20, 1940, employment passports were introduced (VBL. GG. No. 73, December 30, 1940—No. 79, December 31, 1940), which has given the Germans control over every adult and youth in the Gouvernement Général. As a direct consequence of this measure, the general registration of all people able to work was effected, and the obligation always to carry these employment passports was imposed. This passport completely deprives the Pole of freedom of movement, for he is now compelled to stay in the town specified in the passport, and he cannot leave the territory in which he is employed. The district commanders are supposed to determine the conditions of labor and the wage rate. (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 14.)

---

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 29, "Child Labor."

<sup>2</sup> The Germans are trying to make a special national group of the mountaineers, who are called in Polish *Gorale*, in order to divide the Polish nation further.

## LABOR RECRUITING—MAN HUNTS AND KIDNAPPING

In spite of all its stringency, this law did not bring the Germans the expected results. Most of the Poles did not even register, or else during the first year of the occupation by various means avoided being enrolled for the compulsory labor gangs. There were even workers who enrolled on a voluntary basis for work in Germany, hoping to have better conditions. But they were not many.

On April 24, 1940, Governor-General Frank took cognizance of this situation and declared that many persons had not enrolled for work and had not registered in spite of his appeal, stating further that he would not tolerate such behavior in the future. Frank's declaration was followed by deeds. In a most cruel manner, Poles were taken for labor in Germany. Suddenly in broad daylight different streets would be closed off by the Gestapo, and the people in the street would be loaded into trucks and sent directly to the assembling points, whence they were sent to Germany. They were not even permitted to take a coat or to telephone home in order to get a bag of clothing; women caught with children in the streets were separated from them, and even babies in carriages were left behind and the mothers dragged into the trucks. The persons thus rounded up had their papers examined but how far these were respected depended on the individual soldiers who carried out the round-up. Persons who resisted were shot immediately. We read in an underground paper of September 19, 1940, of the round-up and street man hunt for compulsory labor forces in Otwock near Warsaw, where 17 persons were shot. These man hunts are an everyday occurrence in the life of a Polish worker.

We have not the space here to cite all the round-ups which have taken place. The same horrible facts were repeated over and over again, only the time and place would change. A few examples will give a general picture. Between the 22nd of June and the 30th of September, 1941, in the so-called incorporated provinces, round-ups were carried out quite regularly, even more so than in the *Gouvernement Général*. They were made in churches on Sundays, where they were followed by scenes of the utmost brutality, and in the streets of towns. In Lodz, Poznan, and other cities, passers-by were arrested for compulsory labor. In the Stopnica, large numbers of teachers were deported for compulsory work.

In Eastern Europe "market day" plays a special role, and on that day peasants from all over the country come every week to their market town in order to buy and sell. Since the markets attract a great number of people, they were used by the Germans to round up people and deport them for compulsory labor. In Nalenczow and Wawolnica, in Zamosc, it was announced that important information would be broadcast at the city market through loudspeakers and when the population of the town gathered there to hear what the German authorities had to say, they were rounded up.

At the end of August, 1941, a great number of working men and women in the Warsaw factories were deported to the Reich for compulsory labor, among them, 300 people from the Warsaw Tobacco Monopoly, many skilled steel workers of the municipal trolley-cars, and youths from airfields and other factories. Thousands of workers employed at the airfields at Bielany and Okęcie were released from their jobs, and simultaneously, were inducted for compulsory work in Prussia. In Garwolin and Minsk Mazowiecki, round-ups were carried out at the beginning of September, 1941, on highways, on trains, in the streets and in homes. In the district of Lublin and in Lublin itself, people were literally captured en masse for compulsory work. In Cracow, on November 9, 1941, a man hunt was organized at the railway station, which resulted in the deportation for compulsory work of about 700 people.

This deportation for compulsory labor is sometimes combined with political measures. Expropriation and expelling Polish peasants from their soil is a widespread practice among the Germans, and the Poles are replaced by German settlers, the expropriated peasant being afterwards very often sent away for compulsory labor. A picture of this procedure is given us by an underground paper of November 10, 1940. We read there that in the province of Teshen Silesia (Śląsk Cieszyński) and especially in the villages of Jelesna, Lackowice, Stryszawa, Miłowka, Rajcza, and Zwardon, nearly the whole Polish population was evicted and, in their place, German farmers were settled. Men and youths from these villages were deported for compulsory labor, while women, children, and the aged were sent to Mszana Dolna and the district of Miechów. They were allowed to take up to 25 kilograms' worth of property, and before their deportation an inspection was made and all money and jewelry were

confiscated. Many committed suicide. Some slew their own cattle. Others destroyed their houses or attacked the German police with axes. Many were executed.

At the end of January, 1942, the Germans started to register the whole younger generation. Rumors about the coming man hunts spread among the workers. The first one occurred in Lublin on the 21st of February, 1942, when between 12 and 3 P.M., the main streets were closed by the Gestapo and German *Hilfspolizei*. Passers-by, customers in the cafeterias, restaurants, and barber shops, and even shoppers were rounded up by the Germans, both men and women being arrested. All these people, about 4,000, were brought to the local jail where they were segregated. Those who had documents and whose employment was regarded as necessary and, later on, older people were released. The majority were placed at the disposal of the *Arbeitsamt*, while some were turned over to the Gestapo for political reasons. Great round-ups were organized in Cracow and in smaller towns, and were the signal for similar action everywhere.

#### THE NUMBER OF POLISH WORKERS IN THE REICH

According to Mr. Stanislaus Mikolajczyk, who in 1942 was the Polish Minister of Home Affairs, in the first half of 1942 1,500,000 Poles were recruited for labor in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Department of Social Reconstruction (March, 1943), estimates the number of Polish workers in Germany as 2,000,000 which also embraces the soldiers employed in industry.<sup>2</sup> Both numbers can be regarded only as estimates, because of the difficulties in getting information.

According to my own estimates, also based on German sources, in the first half of 1942, the number of Polish hands working in industry and agriculture in the Reich, together with prisoners of war, was about 1,500,000. Kulischer estimates at the beginning of 1943 the number of Polish workers in Germany as about 1,300,000 (both agricultural and industrial), but he states that besides those employed in the Reich, Polish workers are

<sup>1</sup> Press Conference held with Brendon Bracken, British Minister of Information, at the British Ministry of Information, July 9, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> "Bulletin of Information" (in Polish), published by the Polish Ministry of Information.



reported to have been conscripted in great numbers as labor troops for the German army on the Russian Front.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FATE OF THE POLISH WORKER IN THE REICH

On September 17, 1940, upon Goering's request, Himmler, the chief of the Gestapo, issued an order that Poles employed in the German Reich must wear on their chests a letter "P" in violet on a yellow background. According to the *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, of September 27, 1942, the workers from the Soviet territories and also from the Polish eastern territories must wear a special badge, a yellow ribbon on the sleeve with the letter "O" meaning *Ostarbeiter*.

In connection with the first decree, the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (Federation of Germans Abroad) *Gauverband Berlin*, issued an appeal which reads as follows:

"The Reichsführer of the S.S. and Police has ordered in the name of Reichs Marshal Goering that all Polish workers of both sexes shall in future wear ostensibly on the right breast outside their clothes a cloth insignia as shown above.

"This insignia must be firmly sewed on to the clothes.

"We live today at a time when our German Reich is rising toward higher destinies and we realize that in the future elements foreign to our race will live in increasing numbers within our *Lebensraum*. Moreover, because of the introduction of Polish industrial and agricultural workers, certain questions have already reached an acute stage throughout the Reich. The German Reich will only be able to preserve its everlasting racial integrity if every German respects himself in racial matters and is inspired by them in his conduct. Laws can only lend their sanction to social life. What is most important is the attitude of each individual, based upon his conviction and fortitude. The whole people must be enlightened in every possible way on the dangers inherent in life in common with peoples of foreign blood.

"That is why it is essential to enlighten you constantly, to recall the atrocities committed by the Poles against our German fellow countrymen and to recommend aloofness as regards Polish workers.

"Polish nationals have now come amongst us as industrial and agricultural workers and as prisoners. Whoever is in contact with them for service reasons realizes that the hatred of the

<sup>1</sup> Eugene M. Kulischer: "The Displacement of Population in Europe," International Labor Office, Montreal, 1942, p. 137.

Poles for us is greater than ever, that in this racial struggle the Poles have long experience in which we are lacking, and that they still believe that with the assistance of our enemies they will be able to rebuild a new Poland, greater than ever. . . .

"Our racial existence is at stake. Above all beware that ties are not formed outside our common faith.

"Our peasants know nothing about the racial struggle. They look upon the Pole who greets them with 'Blessed is the Lord' as an honest man, and reply 'For ever and ever, Amen.' Poles who arrived only with the clothes on their back have been given linen and clothing by the peasants. These they sold to other Poles, then bought tobacco with the proceeds of the sale. Groups of Poles that had been scattered along the highways, have gathered together anew at the next crossing. See whether the Poles write long letters home. As a result of these letters, parcels have arrived with food from Poland, so one can imagine what the Poles wrote home.

"Never give Poles any money. When in a peasant family the mother is expecting her third child and there is only a Polish servant to help her, offer your assistance.

"Germans! The Poles can never be your comrades. Poles are beneath all Germans whether on the farm or in the factory. Be just, as all Germans must be, but never forget that you belong to the Master Race (*Herrenvolk*).

"The German army has restored peace for us in Europe. We are responsible for peace in the new Great Germany. Life in common with men belonging to foreign races will often bring racial struggles in which you must conquer as a German."

This appeal gives us an idea of the approach of the German authorities and the German political organizations toward the Polish workers employed in the Reich. All signs of sympathy are prohibited. In some rare cases of help given to Polish workers or prisoners of war by Germans, those involved were punished by the courts. The Polish workers—those with the letter "P" as well as those with the letter "O"—are virtually outlawed in Germany.

The underground press has also given us some details about the situation of the Polish workers in the Reich, and in an underground paper of November 10, 1940, we read the following characteristic note:

"Polish workers deported to Germany will not come home in the winter time. Their fate is a bitter one—hard work, poor food, miserable treatment, low wages. Employment agencies

ask families of people working in Germany to send them warm clothing for the winter. It seems that they cannot buy shoes, underwear, or warm clothing with their wages. Because the German authorities are afraid that the terribly exploited Polish workers who go home for the winter will not return to Germany, they prefer to keep them in a special barracks and keep them through the winter. Only very ill people and those unable to work may return home."

Hitler's decree concerning the wearing of the letter "P" by the Polish workers employed in the Reich probably received much comment in the Polish underground press. An underground newspaper of October 16, 1940, gives an account of Polish public opinion in this matter, and of the attitude of the Poles toward their employment in Germany. Some hopes had existed that in Germany the treatment would not be so bad, but these were very soon destroyed by the true, uncensored information which was smuggled out.

"Immediately after the invasion, the walls of cities and villages were covered with very alluring advertisements concerning work in Germany. According to them, the worker would receive quite reasonable remuneration in cash besides proper food and other privileges. We might expect that the Polish laborer who took the place in industry or agriculture of a drafted German worker would be properly treated. Of course, letters sent to the families in Poland, which are written under German command or censored, confirmed these hopes, in part at least, although at the same time far too many families received official notices of the worker's death from pneumonia and very often with no cause given. Many of us thought that the situation was not so bad, that labor is hard everywhere, both at home and abroad. We wondered a little that nobody was receiving his wages in cash—the wages which were to be sent to the families—but we comforted ourselves with the thought that the workers were saving the money in order to bring it back personally. But you cannot fool people forever, and the rumor soon went around that all this talk of wages, food, and privileges was nothing but a common lie and that actually the treatment of Polish workers in Germany is very bad. It is well known that all German life is regimented and therefore Polish workers are regimented, too. The Gestapo chief, Himmler, ordered that all Polish workers, both men and women, should wear on their chests a visible sign of their identity—a square with the letter "P" in the center. Further-

more, the German social organizations distributed throughout the whole country an appeal to Germans teaching them how to behave toward Polish workers. This appeal read as follows. . . ."

(The paper here quotes the appeal of the *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, Gauverband Berlin*, which has been reproduced above.)

The official Polish attitude, as well as public opinion, was against leaving Poland to take employment in the Reich, either on a voluntary or a compulsory basis, and the population was warned against registration, which was required by German law under threat of punishment. In occupied Poland, the attitude toward the decrees of the German authorities is shaped by the orders of the underground organizations, and its press plays a very important role in this connection. In March, 1941, the Polish Underground Movement issued the following regulations concerning recruitment of labor for Germany, which were published in an underground paper of March 15, 1941:

"Poland is against the emigration of the Polish workers both industrial and agricultural to Germany, because, first, they are directly or indirectly helping Germany with which country Poland is at war, and against which country the war will be continued until final victory. Second, all these workers are without any legal, social, and moral rights and, as a result, are doomed to exploitation by hostile employers and their families remain at home and suffer. Polish workers deported to Germany should be conscious that the more they work for Germany the more will the day of deliverance of Poland from the German yoke be delayed. Therefore, we appeal to all of you who are in danger of deportation to try to escape from it by whatever means are most suitable to your environment (village, town, factory)."

On the day when the transport of Polish workers was leaving Wilno for Germany (1942), the city walls were covered with the following appeal of the Underground Labor Movement:

"Polish workers—you are going to Germany for infamous work, not like free people going abroad to work, but as slaves. You were recruited with lies and terror—separated by force from families which you will now be unable to help. No good Pole would go to work in Germany of his own free will, as you know that all their factories and mines are working for the army which is trying to enslave the whole world. Polish workers

—in Germany, try to disrupt and disorganize the social structure. Follow the principle 'the more the enemy suffers, the better for us.' Work slowly and poorly. Don't miss any opportunity to ruin and destroy tools and workshops. You should be proud of low efficiency. In relation to other suffering nationalities, especially our Czech brothers, be loyal, in relation to other Poles be as a friend and brother. Solidarity should be your weapon. Look with despise upon the hostile propaganda of which the aim is to poison your soul. We will win. Long live Poland, long live Free Europe!"

---

## Jewish Labor in Occupied Poland

---

### LEGAL STATUS

The plight of the Jews under Nazi occupation is so well known that it needs no comment here. All the "laws" issued by the Germans with regard to Jews were only preparatory measures for extermination; in actual fact the Jews were outlawed, and to kill them was regarded as a commendable act. What this persecution looked like in daily life can be gathered from the following excerpt of a diary of a Polish eyewitness. It is taken from "The Ghetto Speaks," a press bulletin of the American Representation of the General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland (No. 24, May 1, 1944), and is quoted here as an illustration. Such illustrations could be multiplied indefinitely.

On August 12, 1942, this witness states, he himself saw, while walking along a street in Warsaw, two carts loaded with Jewish children, none of whom appeared to be more than two years old.

On the 19th of August, he saw a group of between 150 and 200 Jewish children being driven through Gesia Street. "They were walking huddled together, pressing against each other in terrible fright. Some were crying, others biting their fingers in terror. German guards walked alongside with their guns pointed at them . . .

"At the corner of Okopowa Street, I saw a group of Jewish women waiting. As soon as the children came near, one of the women ran up to the German guard and began telling him something, pointing to one child in the group. The German shouted at her, pushed her back and then raised his rifle and shot her. The children began to cry louder but were hurried on toward the station.

"What happened to them? The same that happened to those I saw a week before. They were killed."

Another entry in this diary records what the same Pole saw in Lublin about the end of November.

"I was walking along the Grodzka Street toward the ghetto when all of a sudden I heard a terrible cry coming from a side street. A group of more than 100 Jewish children, boys and girls, of which the oldest could not have been more than eight or nine, was being driven through the street by about a dozen armed Germans. Some children were crying out: 'Mother! Mother!' If they halted they were prodded on by rifle butts.

"One child made a sign toward a window in Grodzka Street where a woman could be seen. The German guards immediately fired a shot at the window. The children were forced to walk on. I followed them part of the way toward the station and later was told that they were all packed into the wagon like herrings in a barrel so that many of them must have died before they reached the slaughter camp to which they were being taken.

"I have seen many, many terrible scenes in Poland since the Germans came in but I can never forget the faces of these terrified Jewish children who were being led to death."

Compulsory labor for Jews<sup>1</sup> was introduced on October 26, 1939, and according to the ordinance of this date, all Jews inhabiting the Gouvernement Général became subject to compulsory labor. (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 231.) By virtue of this decree (Section 1), Jews must be incorporated into special labor battalions for compulsory work. All Jewish inhabitants of the

<sup>1</sup> The Jew was defined by the German authorities in the Gouvernement Général as follows:

1. He is a Jew who is descended from at least three grandparents of Jewish race.
2. He is considered a Jew who is descended from two grandparents of Jewish race when
  - a. he belonged to the Jewish religious community or had been admitted to it prior to September 1, 1939;
  - b. married to a Jewess or vice versa at the time the present ordinance entered into force, or who since that date has contracted marriage with a Jew or Jewess;
  - c. born to a Jew as defined in pars. 1 of the present article, out of wedlock, after May 31, 1941.
3. He is considered a Jew one of whose grandfathers belonged to a Jewish religious community.

A "crossed Jew" is defined as follows: (*Judischer Mischling*)

1. Whosoever is a "crossed Jew" according to the terms (art. 3) of Reich legislation.
2. Whosoever, being a former Polish national or without nationality, is descended from two grandparents of Jewish race, but is not a Jew within the meaning of Article II, para. 2 of the present ordinance.

The provisions of Article II, para. 3 are likewise applicable.

"Ordinance of July 24, 1940, Defining the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in the Gouvernement Général."

Gouvernement Général from 14 to 60 years of age are, in principle, subject to compulsory labor.<sup>1</sup>

The obligation to work applies to all male Jews from 12 to 60, who must present themselves at their respective Jewish community centers in order to become inscribed on the register of labor records. The Jews are strictly forbidden to own tools and machinery which can be used in compulsory labor, infringement of this regulation bringing ten years' imprisonment. In order to have control of all Poles of Jewish origin, the head of the SS and police issued a special regulation on December 11, 1939 (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 231), prohibiting Jews to change their residence without special permission of the German authorities. These regulations concerning tools and residence control the compulsory labor of Jews mainly outside the Ghettos.

#### TYPES OF JEWISH LABOR IN POLAND

It is difficult for Jews to find any other type of work than the compulsory labor imposed upon them by the Germans. This compulsory labor can be divided into two types: the first, employment in labor camps, the second, employment in factories, military enterprises, and for military services. The handicrafts supplying the needs of the Ghetto population were later organized by the Jewish communities in the form of co-operatives and can be regarded as a form of more "independent labor"; but these also had compulsory elements. All details in this chapter refer to the situation of the Jews before the great massacres in the Ghettos in 1942.

#### JEWISH COMPULSORY LABOR CAMPS IN OCCUPIED POLAND

The institute of Jewish Affairs in New York declared upon the basis of material in the *Gazeta Żydowska*<sup>2</sup> that in the summer of 1941 about 80,000 Jews were working in the labor camps, and that an additional number of 10,000 to 15,000 Jews were obliged to work by day on special construction projects or for private German contractors, being permitted to go home for the night. They worked in coal and iron mines, steel mills, sugar refineries, railroad freight yards, lumber mills, and on farms.

<sup>1</sup> Regulation No. 2 of December 12, 1939, supplementary to the ordinance of October 26, 1939, governing compulsory labor of the Jewish population in the Gouvernement Général (VBL. GG. BG. 1939, p. 246).

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Gazette*, an official Jewish paper issued in Poland under Nazi control.



The same institute estimates that there were at least 85 Jewish labor camps in Poland by 1941.

The slightest infraction of rules results in the offender being sent to a concentration camp, particularly to the death camp of Tremblinka, near Sokolow, where Jews and non-Jews alike were subject to forced labor of exceptional severity. In the *Gazeta Zydowska*, we very often find descriptions of such labor camps, and we quote below excerpts from some of them in order to give the reader an idea of this terrible reality. In the issue of August 17, 1940, we find an account of the visit of a commission in Jedlanka near Radom, where a Jewish labor camp has been established. Here, the compulsory workers drain swamps, and stand barefoot in mud up to their ankles.

"The work performed by them," we read, "is hard and reminds us of the work of the Brazilian 'cabocles,' who drain the marshy Amazon River. Swarms of mosquitoes fly around the workers' heads. . . . The majority of the workers are youths. There are also people over forty, and we met one man of fifty. . . . These workers dwell in wooden barracks which were especially built for them. . . . We are informed that they are fed three times a day. For breakfast and dinner they have coffee and bread with fat or marmalade. For lunch, they have a soup made from vegetables, potatoes, and fat. From time to time, they also get meat. . . ."

We have extracted all the pertinent information from this article, omitting the official praise of the German administration (how clean the camps are, how satisfied the workers are, and so on) which the author was obviously compelled to include. Other accounts of conditions of compulsory labor which have come to us are very much the same. We read, for instance, in the *Gazeta Zydowska* of July 27, 1940, that the workers employed in Cracow get a breakfast consisting of a glass of tea with a slice of bread, and for lunch a plate of soup and bread.

This is the picture that we get from official sources controlled by the Nazi authorities. In a censored report smuggled out in the first half of 1941, we read that about 9,000 people were deported from the Ghetto in Warsaw to do forced labor in the hinterland. The work is so hard that every day the corpses of people who died while laboring are brought to Warsaw. The conditions of labor, especially the barracks and the food, are dreadful in the compulsory labor camps, and about 20 people

die every day. Very many seriously ill people are sent back to the Ghetto.

It is also known that Jews are employed in the textile industry in Lodz, where they are put at the disposal of the German employers. The advertisement inserted in the *Litzmanstaedter Zeitung*, a Nazi paper published in Lodz, depicts more expressively the status of the Jew than anything else. There we read, for instance, the following advertisement, "Have at my disposal 230 qualified Jewish tailors, furriers, and hatters. Accept orders for army as well as private enterprise."

#### JEWS "FREE LABOR" IN POLAND

There were a few artisans and other workers employed in Ghettos and Jewish sections, and they form the group of people which might be classified as "free labor," although the position of these artisans was very difficult because they were unable to get any raw materials. This situation has compelled most of the Jewish communities in Poland to organize artisan collectives, the members of which had to belong to the Jewish Artisan Guild. The Jewish Council soon found itself in difficulties with these collectives in the Warsaw Ghetto, because of the disparity between wages and the market price of food.

The *Gazeta Zydowska*, which is of course controlled by the Nazis, cannot give a full picture of this gloomy state of affairs, but a thorough study of it makes it possible for a patient reader to find some grain of truth even in its cursory accounts. In the issue of February 7, 1940, we find a story about a man on relief who asked for his relief for six months in advance. When he was asked what would happen if he died before the six months were up, he replied, "That would be my good luck."

---

## Some Consequences of Nazi Domination Over Polish Labor

---

The German labor policy in Poland has resulted in far-reaching social changes—changes which are undermining the whole Polish social structure, as well as the smaller units of social life such as the family. Hitler and his rulers will disappear after the Allied victory, but many of the consequences of the Nazi regime will leave deep traces upon the future life of Poland.

New social classes are arising. The so-called Polish intelligentsia, a large class of civil servants, employers and professionals, who played a very important role in the past and were relatively numerous and dynamic, have lost their economic and social position entirely. They were simply removed from their positions and only lower forms of employment in municipal administration, in social insurance offices and so forth are available to them. The high schools, academies and universities are closed, while a number of the primary schools, too, have been closed and many teachers thus deprived of their livelihood. These people are forming a new class of marginal individuals without steady employment or opportunities. They earn their living by working in small trades, bringing food from the villages to the black market in the towns, exposing their lives every day to the dangers of police and Gestapo persecution; they are driving rickshas in the towns, where, because of the lack of gasoline, bicycle rickshas have taken the place of taxis. Most of them have sold their own personal property in order to have something on which to live. A large class of uprooted people is now entering its fourth year of abnormal existence, whose economic situation is, on the whole, worse than that of the workers and peasants; yet it should not be forgotten that the situation of the

worker can be described only by the word: misery; hence, the social structure in Poland is reversing itself under the impact of German occupation.

In the Polish working class important changes also are taking place. The large number of Poles deported to Germany is having an appreciable effect on the family structure of this class, and in local industry, women and children are substituting for the male population. According to reports from the second half of 1941, a large number of children over 12 are being employed more and more frequently in Poland, for example, in the Cagielski factory in Poznan.

Where the workers are employed in local industry and are not deported, their salaries are so insufficient that the children must contribute to the family budget. By selling cigarettes, operating pushcarts and bicycle rickshas, they often earn more than their fathers. This may result in an increased authority for the children within the worker's family, and the increase of family solidarity under external economic pressure; but, on the other hand, the change in the age of the Polish working class and the mass compulsory employment must have a disintegrating effect on the family. The workers employed in Germany are separated from their families, the men from the women, which has disastrous consequences from the biological point of view.

The undernourishment of the Polish urban population will make this nation, like all the other subjugated nations, much less healthy than the Germans. The German children, like the adult population, are getting better food than the Poles, and the Polish worker is undernourished and deprived of elementary protection. When the war is over, the Polish population will be ruined physically, unfit and exhausted, in spite of victory. The Germans, especially the children, will enter the new world in a better physical condition than the subjugated nations.

But there will be other consequences which the engineers of the German labor policy probably do not expect. Germany was always the center of skilled labor in Europe, and has always preserved very thoroughly this monopoly of technical experience. Hundreds of thousands of foreign workers are now employed in the heart of Germany in the most specialized and best organized factories. Within these four years, the Polish worker will have learnt much from the Germans and become as skilled as he in industries which were unknown to him before. The Germans are training Poles, and the youths deprived of

high schools are forced to go to the industrial professional schools. The Germans do not wish to train the Poles for higher skilled positions, but the war situation compels them to use these despised people in all branches, and by the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of Polish workers will know German industry and techniques as well as the Germans. This may have profound consequences in the future for the development of industry and the building of new industries outside Germany, and may also affect the monopoly position of some branches of German industry.

The German forced labor policy is applied through brutal means, and the resistance of the Polish worker to it is very strong in its political aspect, although rather indirect in the social field. As we know, the political struggle of labor always goes hand in hand with the economic struggle. Nevertheless, there is some information that, in spite of the danger, the direct resistance of Polish workers even in the economic field has persisted. We read in a Polish underground paper of December 19, 1940, that in the tramway workshops in Warsaw, on Mlynarska Street, the workers struck. They were compelled to go back to work under the threat of immediate execution, and four workers' delegates and two directors were arrested. We read also in an underground paper of June 20, 1941, about workers in the railway workshops who, on June 6, refused to accept their salaries which, according to this paper, were not even sufficient to buy potatoes for the week. All these signs of resistance prove that the worker is compelled to work under direct terror of the German Gestapo and military forces. The whole attitude of the occupant develops in the working class a hate toward Germany much more intense than anything ever felt before. And this hate can also influence the future international relations of the Polish trade unions unless the German worker starts a direct struggle against the Nazi order and proves by his own deeds that he is anti-fascist and anti-Nazi, for the attitude of the German working class in the decisive moments of this war inevitably affects the attitudes of other workers toward the German workers. At all events, at present the international working-class is little disposed to feelings of solidarity with the German workers. These are some of the implications of the Nazi occupation which are already visible. There will be other equally important ones which are not visible now.

*Part Six*

EPILOGUE



---

## The Polish Proletariat in Its European Framework

---

Among the gray mass of people we encounter every day, certain individuals stand out. They are perhaps no better or worse than the others, and it is often difficult to put one's finger on the exact characteristic that distinguishes them from their fellows; all one can say is that they are different, that somehow they compel our attention, and in every circumstance assert their individuality. A painter often notices this individuality at first glance and says that such and such a person has an "interesting" face, one worth painting—although this face is not necessarily beautiful.

The same is true of social groups or classes. Some of these have no "individuality" of their own, are colorless and uninteresting, while others are picturesque, and full of character, although not necessarily superior in any respect. They simply have specific, irreducible features. Needless to say, the "individuality" of a group is not a hereditary or innate characteristic—it is the product of a pattern of behavior that results from the given group's history, economic status and social structure.

The Polish proletariat belongs to these distinctive groups. In the colorful amalgamation that is the European working class, the Polish workers have a color of their own, not as brilliant as that of some of the great western workers' movements, but quite distinctive and interesting in its own way.

### KARL MARX AND THE POLISH WORKERS

There are various reasons for this individuality. In the first place, Poland's social structure has features peculiar to itself. Poland is an industrialized peasant country, and thus it is dif-



ferent from the classical homeland of the industrial proletariat, England, where class divisions were doubtless more clearly marked than in many other countries. There are no peasants in England, while neither in France nor in Germany do the peasants play the same political and economic role as in Poland. Even in Czechoslovakia their influence is less strong and the country's industrial character is more marked. Poland falls somewhere between Czechoslovakia, which is more industrialized and yet retains a peasant character, and countries like Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, which are fundamentally peasant countries. Thus the orthodox Marxist division into two classes which was adequate for the conditions prevailing in England, is inadequate when applied to Poland, unless we limit ourselves to industrial and agricultural laborers, for it does not apply to the large masses of the peasantry, nor to the numerous persons engaged in home industries, the small artisans and workers employed in minor industries.

In the small processing industries and handicrafts, there is no rigid class division; the employer is a "capitalist" one day and a "hired laborer" the next. The journeymen in such industries after a certain period usually become "masters" or employers, because in Poland only a small capital was required to found a workshop.

The relation of the *chalupnik*, that is, person engaged in home industry, to his "employer" is different from the relation of the salaried worker to the capitalist. The *chalupnik* works with his own tools and in his own home, and in appearance is entirely independent; his "employer" merely supplies him with raw material and sells his products. He is only a producer, not a hired laborer, and he has no "employer" in the ordinary sense of the word. And yet the homemaker, as well as the worker in the small industries, belongs to the most exploited, most unhappy and most poverty-stricken groups.

Similarly, the small peasant who owns two or even five acres of land is neither a capitalist nor a hired laborer, although socially and economically he was worse off than a Silesian foundry worker, who belonged to one of the best paid groups in Poland.

Any realistic analysis of the social structure of Poland must resort to the auxiliary term, social stratum. Here we will use this term to mean a group with a common social tradition, and well-defined cultural, economic and occupational features. In social

struggles individuals belonging to the same social stratum display solidarity.

#### SOCIAL STRATA OF POLAND

In Poland, in addition to the proletariat, the peasants, landowners, the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, constitute such strata. Before passing to our main subject, the workers, it may be useful briefly to survey the other strata.

There is no doubt that the Polish peasants are a group apart, with their own tradition (serfdom and the struggle for land), and distinct cultural and economic characteristics. The peasants have similar needs, and whether poor or well-to-do, their expenditures have, so to speak, a similar purpose. Unlike the intellectual, the peasants did not spend their surplus money on travel, or improved housing conditions, but chiefly on the enlargement and improvement of their farms. Their methods of satisfying their needs are also different, and their amusements are unlike those of the cities, although the city is strongly influencing the village. The peasantry has its own art, music, customs and even a characteristic language. Finally, in all social, political and economic struggles, the peasants display unmistakable solidarity—a solidarity that is not a result of any inborn characteristics, but of a long historical development.

Just as peasants cannot be identified with workers, so the landowners in Poland cannot be identified with the bourgeoisie. The landowners are not only an economic group possessing land, but also a cultural group, having their own social traditions and customs. To be a *ziemianin* or landowner it is not enough to own a large acreage; one must be born a *ziemianin*, one must have a real or imaginary noble origin. A member of the city middle class who buys land does not by any means belong to the *ziemianstwo*, and is not necessarily received in their circles on an equal basis.

The largest urban group is the proletariat, but as mentioned above, this includes not only industrial wage earners, but also—and these are the most numerous—the homeworkers, small artisans, workers in small industries, and even hawkers and peddlers. However, from the political point of view, not all the groups within the proletariat have equal importance, and the dynamic element is the class of wage laborers, especially the industrial workers—just as in every other country in the world.

But in Poland, in addition to the industrial workers and miners, the building trades workers, the masons and the bricklayers are distinguished by special dynamism and activity.

The unemployed constitute a special category. I have in mind only the registered unemployed from among the industrial workers, whose number amounted to 440,000 in the 1930's, an imposing figure. I exclude the rural unemployed which will not be treated here. The social and political importance of this group is enormous. There is a profound difference between the employed and unemployed worker. In the system of social relations, the conflict between the wage laborer and his employer is an important element. It is between these two adversaries that the struggle for improved conditions, higher wages and a shorter working day is waged. The unemployed are not in conflict with the employer, but with the state; they struggle over the wages for public works, for relief, and other forms of social assistance that have never been adequate anywhere. This is a fundamental conflict with a system that deprives the unemployed of an opportunity for regular work, and thus a change in the system of government is of fundamental importance for them, and they long for it even when it is against the interests of the working class as a whole and their own. Such was the case of those unemployed in Germany under Weimar who went over to Hitler.

As for the middle class, it is important to note that in Poland it never played the same active political role as in England and other Western European countries. In the first place, the Polish middle class is numerically small—a very “thin” stratum. Throughout her history Poland has lacked a strongly developed merchant class, nor did the Polish bourgeoisie go through a period of revolutionary social action such as did the French and English middle classes. The English middle class grew strong in its struggle against the king for personal and economic freedom, and by the end of 1688 it succeeded in restricting the king's rights. Similarly, the French *tiers état* played a great part in the history of French social struggles, contributed actively to the overthrow of absolutism, the liberation of the French people from feudal fetters, and the development of French democracy and parliamentary government. In the fields of trade and industry, too, the Western European middle classes displayed great energy. The merchants of the past centuries combined an enterprising spirit with ruthless profit-seeking; they accepted every

risk, did not hesitate to travel to remote and unknown countries, founded companies and cities overseas, and crossed stormy seas in frail boats seeking trade, wealth and adventure. Marco Polo is typical of the thirteenth-century merchant. And when the period of the industrial revolution came, the middle classes showed great inventiveness and spirit of enterprise.

The Polish bourgeoisie lacks all these traditions of struggle against absolutism and bold sea-faring activity. In Poland, the struggle for the restriction of the royal power was waged by the magnates and the nobility, and until the period of the partitions Poland was a noblemen's democracy with an elected king. Nor did the Polish middle class contribute to the development of Polish parliamentary institutions—the Diet was a noblemen's representative body. Moreover, before the partitions Poland lacked an adequate coastline and merchant fleet, and therefore the sea did not play the same part in Polish economic history that it played in England or France. The Polish merchant did not seek distant markets nor sail in far-off seas—this was done much later by a few romantic intellectuals, like Joseph Conrad and Stżylecki. Finally, when machines and technological progress reached Poland, the country was exhausted by its insurrections against the foreign invaders, and lacked a numerous well-to-do bourgeoisie capable of developing the necessary initiative. There was none of that personal freedom and security, to which the English merchants and industrialists owe so much. Industry in the Congress Kingdom was built after 1815 by the initiative of the State, by the gifted Lubecki and his government, and only in the '40's and '70's of the nineteenth century did the large-scale capitalist appear in Poland, at which time industries grew at a rapid tempo, and foreign capital came in, usually in a form unprofitable for Poland, because these foreign investments were made for the purpose of realizing quick profits and were withdrawn later.

But even in the most recent times, the Polish bourgeoisie failed to wield any great influence in their country, and remained a relatively insignificant stratum. Politically, they leaned toward the clerical and nationalist parties.

It was different with the Polish intelligentsia, which played a far greater political role than the bourgeoisie. No adequate social analysis of pre-war Poland is possible without taking into account white collar workers, professional classes and the intellectuals. But before taking up this question with regard to

Poland, a few general remarks on the intelligentsia are necessary.

#### THE INTELLIGENTSIA

Neither in the United States nor in England has this stratum had the importance it has had on the European continent, especially in its eastern regions. More than that, this stratum does not exist in the Anglo-Saxon countries as a separate entity: the "professional class" and the "managerial class" are completely integrated with the bourgeoisie or middle class. In Eastern Europe the situation is different: the intelligentsia comprise the extensive group of all people who work intellectually, and not physically, from the lowest civil servant through the liberal professions (lawyers, physicians, engineers), to the real intellectuals, that is to say, the scientists, artists and writers. All these categories belong to the same group; they display economic, social and cultural similarities.

Economically, the intelligentsia has an average standard of living higher than that of the proletariat. Individual intellectuals may be capitalists, or hired laborers, they may belong to different classes, yet because they belong to the same stratum they display common features, which, because of their intimate relation to culture, are difficult to define scientifically. In one instance, however, it can be done: the nature of their expenditures. The intelligentsia, for instance, in general spend more on housing than workers do, a comparison of course which has meaning only if the incomes are equal. This is only a detail, but it is characteristic. A high salaried worker did not usually spend the same amount of money on his flat as did the intellectual in the same wage bracket. A highly skilled worker, even if he earned 500 zlotys, did not rent three or four rooms as did the man of the intelligentsia in the same wage bracket. He was satisfied with his two rooms, saving the rest of his money, usually in order to buy a small house with a garden.

In a sociological analysis of the intelligentsia the most important element is its social functions.

The countries of continental Europe had numerous bureaucracies. Outside the cities the administrative system was based not so much on self-government as on a centralized bureaucracy with appointed civil servants. The relations of these civil servants to the State is different from that of the hired worker to the employer, for as Marx justly says, the essence of the



relation between capital and labor is power. But the civil servant who is hired by the State acquires power and disposes of it; in a country based on a bureaucratic system he is the ruler. Thus, in a bureaucratic system, government is an attribute of the intelligentsia; the popular masses may retain ultimate control.

The professional intellectuals are also scientists, professors, and teachers. They monopolize science and knowledge, grant diplomas, and the right to practice professions, and as teachers also transmit knowledge and human experience, or as physicians, lawyers or engineers, they apply it. Journalism, radio, that is, information in the widest sense of the word, are also intellectual professions—thus the intelligentsia also influences public opinion.

Government, science (transmission and application of science), public opinion—these three essential social functions were thus concentrated in the hands of the intelligentsia. The orthodox socialists often forget about one important social group, quite definite in continental Europe (contrary to the U.S.A. and Great Britain), which cannot be placed either in the capitalist or in the employee group. This is the army—especially the officers. In Europe this is a factor in itself. The demobilized soldiers and officers have formed the bulk of the fascist movement in Europe and subjectively did not care at all for the capitalists. During the war they risked their lives and the non-commissioned officers and officers had power, while after demobilization they went to their civil professions, lost their splendor and often had to face quite a hard and unjust economic position. Fascism was for many of them a chance to get back into power, and gave them many illusions.

The officers corps especially and the army generally is a social group in continental Europe with great power and influence, which had played an important role in such countries as Germany and France. The officers corps was linked with the intelligentsia by family and friendship, as well as by education.

The intelligentsia appeared as a separate stratum in continental Europe toward the beginning of the nineteenth century. Earlier, in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, the professions which today are represented by the intelligentsia were part of the middle class or the nobility. The nobility, the magnates and the court monopolized government power; science and the liberal professions belonged to middle class cate-

gories. After the overthrow of feudalism, and the French Revolution, modern administration arose in Europe, and with it the number of civil servants especially trained for the job of government began to grow. The introduction of compulsory education led to the creation of a large number of teachers. There was an increasing need of engineers, and the development of trade and industry was accompanied by a growing number of lawyers. Even new schools and universities trained an ever-increasing number of professional intellectuals.

By the end of the nineteenth century the development of this stratum was more and more noticeable. Karl Kautsky called attention to the fact that between 1882 and 1885 the number of workers in Germany grew by 62% while the number of intellectuals grew by 118.9%.<sup>1</sup> This tendency has continued, and the number of intellectuals has constantly grown.

The present stage of industrial development is characterized by automatization. Unskilled labor is being replaced more and more by mechanical devices, and the war has contributed to the acceleration of this process. The unskilled worker is therefore less and less needed in mechanized production, while the number of highly qualified and intellectual workers is increasing. In the United States, the road builder who works with a shovel in his hands is today something of the past; numerous machines have taken his place, and for the production of these machines, engineers, draftsmen, factory clerks, bank clerks, are needed. And the mechanic who directs the machine is coming closer to the intellectual worker, because in this work the intellectual effort is becoming predominant. An analogous process of technical development is taking place in many other branches.

In Europe, the dynamic and numerous stratum of intelligentsia played a prominent political role. Controlling the political as well as the economic and educational apparatus, they were a decisive factor in shaping the ideology of several countries. It is doubtful whether Hitler's victory in Germany would have been possible without the fanatical masses of intelligentsia nourished for a century on Hegel, Fichte and Nietzsche, imbued with the Wagnerian myth, and the legend of the master race. In their fanaticism and belief in social myths, this was an obscurantist mass. Could Hitler have ruled Germany as he does

<sup>1</sup> Karl Kautsky: *Bernstein und das Sozial demokratische Program*, Stuttgart, 1889.

without his *Landrats* and *Geheimrats* formed on the model of the Prussian police and Prussian army? The importance and extent of this stratum was underestimated by the Weimar Republic, just as they are underestimated by Hitler himself. This stratum may still play an important part in Europe.

The workers' movement took up the problem of the intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth century. Kautsky tried to fit it into the orthodox class division, assigning part of it to the bourgeoisie and part to the proletariat. Valuable work was done also by Robert Michels whose worth is not sufficiently appreciated and who later changed his ideas, and Max Nomad in America raised this problem. In the 1930's the Belgian socialist, Henry de Man, who later became a collaborationist, and the Czech sociologist, Arnold Blaha, attempted to define the functions of the intelligentsia, and recently Burnham in the United States has come to the conclusion that they are the future elite, the "managerial class." Lewis Corey outlined a constructive solution of the problem of the co-operation of the intelligentsia, the "managerial class," with the workers within the framework of an organized economic democracy.

The most radical formulation of this problem was made by the Polish socialist Wacław Machajski, who advanced an anti-intelligentsia class theory. Criticizing the socialist trends of his time, he asserted that the new emerging middle class was the intelligentsia, which monopolized education and exploited its privileged position in order to obtain higher pay through the indirect exploitation of the proletariat. Machajski considered the intelligentsia to be a separate class bound by its interests to the capitalists and opposed to the proletariat.

The European socialists waged a victorious struggle against these ideas, and the working class movement everywhere quickly recovered from "*Machajskiism*." But the very existence of such a theory is characteristic, as well as the fact that its author was a Pole. In his writings Machajski constantly referred to the situation of the intelligentsia in the Kingdom of Poland, that is in the part of Poland under Tsarist occupation.

#### THE POLISH INTELLIGENTSIA: A RULING GROUP

The fact is that in Poland, the proletariat and the intelligentsia played a prominent role, although at the beginning of this century this role was not at all such as Machajski represented it to be. In contrast with the colorless and passive Polish bour-



gories. After the overthrow of feudalism, and the French Revolution, modern administration arose in Europe, and with it the number of civil servants especially trained for the job of government began to grow. The introduction of compulsory education led to the creation of a large number of teachers. There was an increasing need of engineers, and the development of trade and industry was accompanied by a growing number of lawyers. Even new schools and universities trained an ever-increasing number of professional intellectuals.

By the end of the nineteenth century the development of this stratum was more and more noticeable. Karl Kautsky called attention to the fact that between 1882 and 1885 the number of workers in Germany grew by 62% while the number of intellectuals grew by 118.9%.<sup>1</sup> This tendency has continued, and the number of intellectuals has constantly grown.

The present stage of industrial development is characterized by automatization. Unskilled labor is being replaced more and more by mechanical devices, and the war has contributed to the acceleration of this process. The unskilled worker is therefore less and less needed in mechanized production, while the number of highly qualified and intellectual workers is increasing. In the United States, the road builder who works with a shovel in his hands is today something of the past; numerous machines have taken his place, and for the production of these machines, engineers, draftsmen, factory clerks, bank clerks, are needed. And the mechanic who directs the machine is coming closer to the intellectual worker, because in this work the intellectual effort is becoming predominant. An analogous process of technical development is taking place in many other branches.

In Europe, the dynamic and numerous stratum of intelligentsia played a prominent political role. Controlling the political as well as the economic and educational apparatus, they were a decisive factor in shaping the ideology of several countries. It is doubtful whether Hitler's victory in Germany would have been possible without the fanatical masses of intelligentsia nourished for a century on Hegel, Fichte and Nietzsche, imbued with the Wagnerian myth, and the legend of the master race. In their fanaticism and belief in social myths, this was an obscurantist mass. Could Hitler have ruled Germany as he does

<sup>1</sup> Karl Kautsky: *Bernstein und das Sozial demokratische Program*, Stuttgart, 1889.

without his *Landrats* and *Geheimrats* formed on the model of the Prussian police and Prussian army? The importance and extent of this stratum was underestimated by the Weimar Republic, just as they are underestimated by Hitler himself. This stratum may still play an important part in Europe.

The workers' movement took up the problem of the intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth century. Kautsky tried to fit it into the orthodox class division, assigning part of it to the bourgeoisie and part to the proletariat. Valuable work was done also by Robert Michels whose worth is not sufficiently appreciated and who later changed his ideas, and Max Nomad in America raised this problem. In the 1930's the Belgian socialist, Henry de Man, who later became a collaborationist, and the Czech sociologist, Arnold Blaha, attempted to define the functions of the intelligentsia, and recently Burnham in the United States has come to the conclusion that they are the future elite, the "managerial class." Lewis Corey outlined a constructive solution of the problem of the co-operation of the intelligentsia, the "managerial class," with the workers within the framework of an organized economic democracy.

The most radical formulation of this problem was made by the Polish socialist Wacław Machajski, who advanced an anti-intelligentsia class theory. Criticizing the socialist trends of his time, he asserted that the new emerging middle class was the intelligentsia, which monopolized education and exploited its privileged position in order to obtain higher pay through the indirect exploitation of the proletariat. Machajski considered the intelligentsia to be a separate class bound by its interests to the capitalists and opposed to the proletariat.

The European socialists waged a victorious struggle against these ideas, and the working class movement everywhere quickly recovered from "*Machajskiism*." But the very existence of such a theory is characteristic, as well as the fact that its author was a Pole. In his writings Machajski constantly referred to the situation of the intelligentsia in the Kingdom of Poland, that is in the part of Poland under Tsarist occupation.

#### THE POLISH INTELLIGENTSIA: A RULING GROUP

The fact is that in Poland, the proletariat and the intelligentsia played a prominent role, although at the beginning of this century this role was not at all such as Machajski represented it to be. In contrast with the colorless and passive Polish bour-

geoisie, the Polish intelligentsia was an active, dynamic and numerous group in no way inferior to the intelligentsia of Russia or Western Europe. Under the Tsarist occupation, the oppression of national minorities barred the way to a professional career, and there was not even a Polish university in Congress Poland. This fact contributed to the radicalization of the Polish intellectuals. Many of them went abroad to study or to find work that satisfied their inclinations. There were many Polish students at all the European universities, and Polish scientists vied successfully with those of other countries. Marie Curie-Sklodowska completed the discovery of radium; Witkowski and Wroblewski liquefied air; Mikulicz was the first to graft bones; Funck pioneered in the discovery of vitamins; Anigstein distinguished himself in the study of tropical diseases. In painting, apart from the great national artists such as Matejko, Chelmonski, Gerson and others, several Poles were represented in the Paris school, such as Zak and Kisling. In music, from the time of Chopin to that of Szymanowski and Karłowicz, there is a long line of Polish composers, performers and teachers like Paderewski, Leschetitsky, Lalewicz, Rodzinski, Rubinstein and Huberman. In the field of literature, Joseph Conrad, Klaczko and Sienkiewicz achieved world fame. Bronisław Malinowski was one of the most prominent anthropologists of our time. These are only a few of many possible examples.

From 1831 on the Polish intelligentsia have played an important role in the political movements of the European continent. In 1848 they fought with the European workers on the barricades of many capitals; in 1871 they distinguished themselves in the ranks of the Paris Communards, and they were also present in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, and in the European revolutions after 1918.

The creation of an independent Poland in 1918 did not result in the elimination of Poles from the international arena, although their activity diminished in other countries as it became concentrated in Poland itself.

The influence of the intelligentsia in Poland was very great in all the political parties: The socialist (PPS), the peasant party (*Wyzwolenie*, the radical fraction of the peasant movement), the nationalists (ND), the conservative nationalist (Right). Before the war of 1914, the Polish intellectuals largely followed radical and progressive slogans, and especially under the Russian occupation played the part of a political leaven.

They were closely connected with the radical working class socialist movement that worked underground, and whose militant and terrorist activity was permeated with romanticism. The Polish intellectuals ardently supported and enlisted in the nuclei of the future Polish army, formed under the Austrian occupation as riflemen's battalions and, later, Legions; from these Legions the higher officers of the armies of independent Poland were later recruited. The Polish colonels of 1918 and the 1920's and generals of the new Polish State were different from the high-ranking officers of other armies; they were for the most part ex-students of philosophy, law or medicine, and after 1926, when Jozef Pilsudski rallied his former comrades from the days of the anti-Tsarist struggles and the Legions, he succeeded in winning over a large portion of the Polish intelligentsia, formerly a progressive and radical element.

During the 1930's in independent Poland, only an insignificant group of intellectuals joined the socialist camp, and those who joined the peasant camp were even less numerous. A large fraction of the students formed the backbone of Rightist, reactionary and often fascist organizations, and the professional intelligentsia, too, largely followed nationalist slogans. During the same period a democratic opposition began to form among the moderate university professors and members of the liberal professions in Warsaw, Wilno, Cracow and Lwow, and especially among the masses of teachers, which, however, was in the minority. Also a peasant intelligentsia began slowly to emerge, professional intellectuals who came from the village, and maintained contact with it despite their urban occupation, and vigorously defended its interests. Although small, this group was influential. But, to be clear, in this period a large majority of the Polish intellectuals followed Pilsudski or the nationalist camp, while only a minority joined the socialist, peasant and workers' camps.

The Polish intelligentsia as a whole controlled the bureaucratic state apparatus; and it must be mentioned here that a not inconsiderable part of Polish economic life was controlled by the State.

The military officers also formed a large and most influential group in Poland. The expenses for the army in the State budget were very large, as was its power. In the 1920's the officers were devoted followers of Marshal Pilsudski, and the majority held progressive and democratic traditions; many of them were

socialists and populists who sympathized with the Polish socialists. In the 1930's some of them left the army because of age and so on, while others abandoned their old ideals. The younger element was imbued with a quite different spirit. The officers became more and more conscious of the army's power; and, simultaneously, a closed officers' corps with a feeling of *esprit de corps* and with faith in "uniforms' honor" was replacing the old democratic setup. Marshal Rydz-Smigly, a one-time socialist, now became a symbol of these tendencies which were so different from the old democratic traditions.

Pilsudski, Rydz-Smigly and their friends controlled the army and that gave them the power owing to which they controlled the State. Pilsudski's regime was a regime of intelligentsia, basing its power on the army and with no backing from the peasants and workers.

#### SOCIAL FORCES

According to the census of 1931, the total population of Poland was 32.1 millions. The number of active intellectual workers, employed and unemployed, was 664,500, including 17,000 engaged in agriculture. If we add to this figure about 78,000 members of the liberal professions (lawyers, physicians, engineers, etc.), we shall obtain a total of about 743,000 people. According to the same census, there were in Poland 4,217,000 workers active in their trades: 1,468,000 in agriculture, fishing, forestry, and gardening; the rest, 2,749,000, in other occupations—industry, mining, transportation, trade, etc. 633,900 workers were occupied in big or medium industries; in 1939 the number of such workers reached 886,000. Finally, in 1939, there were 313,000 unemployed workers; their number was growing in time of the crisis and during the first quarter of 1937 reached 470,000.<sup>1</sup>

All salaried workers of Poland (agricultural, industrial, trade, commerce, mining, etc.) were about six times as strong as the intelligentsia. Roughly, the workers employed in urban settlements were about four times as strong as the intelligentsia, but the industrial workers in large and medium sized industries

<sup>1</sup> The figures are taken from *Maly Rocznik Statystyczny* (Concise Statistical Yearbook), 1939, Warsaw, 1939, except the figure of liberal professions which is taken from *Annuaire des Statistiques Du Travail*, 1941, Bureau International du Travail, Montreal, 1942. There is a slight discrepancy between the ILO figures and the figures of the Polish Statistical Office, probably caused by the fact of omitting or including of some wage earning groups.

(mining, foundry, manufacturing, electric power plants and water industries) alone averaged about 800,000 and the intelligentsia about 700,000 so they were nearly even. In urban communities the intelligentsia even numerically formed a considerable force.

The middle class was not very large, but still reactionary in its majority. Thus the intelligentsia, students, and the middle class in its large majority formed the strength of reaction, while numerically it was quite significant, to say nothing about its influence in government, business, industry, journalism, and radio.

The overwhelming majority of workers was to be found in the progressive camps in the cities, and a small group of intelligentsia mostly in liberal professions. Next to progressive peasants, the workers were the real democratic force of Poland, and they were and are the overwhelming majority of the population. Even in this generalization it should be emphasized that not all the workers were in the socialist and even progressive camp. There were workers of Rightist tendencies—or receptive to reactionary, especially clerical, slogans. In this part of Poland which was formerly occupied by the Germans they were more numerous than in other provinces but they formed insignificant groups only. But still the socialist movement gave a general imprint to the Polish labor movement, as was the case in Russia before the revolution. The socialists were the most active, dynamic, and best organized group, and formed the true "vanguard" of the labor.

The public school teachers, organized in the very powerful Teachers' Union, were progressive and democratic. In contrast to them most of the high school teachers in so-called "gymnasiums" were Rightist and reactionary. In the liberal professions and in the bureaucracy the reactionaries were most influential and dominant.

#### SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AND POLISH REALITY

The Polish social structure also influenced the ideology of the working class movement. When an independent Poland was created, about 75 per cent of its population lived in the villages, and in the nineteenth century, this percentage had been even higher. Thus the working class movement had first of all to adjust itself to the peasant population. The presence of a large stratum of intelligentsia was also a political problem. In its fight for political and social emancipation, in its everyday struggles

against the employer for the improvement of the economic condition of the workers, the working class movement could not disregard these two important social strata. The peasants, emancipated from serfdom in the middle of the nineteenth century, were slowly maturing and taking a part in political life, and were the natural allies of the workers; the socialist movement thus was extended to the countryside. In the part of Poland formerly occupied by Austria, it gained considerable influence. An agricultural program adjusted to Polish reality rather than to dogmatic requirements was necessary. In independent Poland, the radical faction of the peasant movement always co-operated closely with the socialists. After 1930, in the struggle for the democratic reconstruction of Poland, the unified peasants' movement worked closely with the working class movement. The socialist party accepted the same premises as the peasant party in its agricultural program. For the only democratic solution of the Polish agrarian problem is the creation of small independent homesteads and co-operatives. The countryside would reject any other system, a fact which influenced the Polish socialist program.

As for the intelligentsia, for many years the Polish progressive intellectuals were closely allied with the working class movement: during the entire period of subjection the Polish intelligentsia, suffering from national oppression, cut off from opportunities in government service, largely sympathized with socialism. But the creation of an independent Poland opened new fields for the intelligentsia, and, as I have mentioned before, they followed an opportunistic path, with only small groups of intellectuals sharing the fate of the peasants and workers. The majority were in conflict with the popular movements. The intelligentsia of independent Poland failed to create the vigorous progressive-democratic movement which was so vitally needed and there was no progressive democratic party capable of rallying the intellectuals. Only a few years before the present war the Democratic Club, and a little later, the Democratic Party, were born and began slowly to organize the progressive intelligentsia. The Polish working class movement did not follow the path of Machajski, whose theories, incidentally, were not very much known in Poland. On the contrary, Polish socialism probably recognized the need of extending its activity among the intelligentsia earlier than other European socialist movements. In the 1930's this need was taken for granted by

many Polish socialist leaders and influenced them in the elaboration of their program.

Poland's international situation also strongly influenced the ideology of Polish socialism. Long subjection to foreign rule and national oppression taught every Pole to value national freedom and independence. From the very inception of the socialist movement, the internationals supported the revolutionary struggles for the liberation of Poland. But even after independence was achieved, Poland was not secure. Her proximity to powerful and dynamic nations and the lack of a system of collective security influenced her internal policies. Especially after Hitler's accession to power, foreign intervention in Poland became a real threat, and the domestic policy of the socialists had to take this threat into account, for internal dissension might have provoked a German invasion and a new partition of the country. Thus the working class and peasant movements were limited in their struggle for the reconstruction of Polish democracy by their preoccupation with the protection of Polish independence.

Likewise, in the international arena, the Polish socialists sought solutions that would reconcile the preservation of national independence with the premises of international socialism. They supported all forms of international co-operation based on the equal rights of great and small nations. They supported the League of Nations and collective security. After 1933, the Polish working class and peasant movements took a pro-French attitude and opposed the bilateral pacts. Today, when Polish political life has again gone underground, the ideas of federation, collective security, a world organization of states, inspire the Polish working class movement and the whole democratic camp.

Tradition also plays a great part in determining the political behavior of workers in a given country. For instance, Spain reacted to fascist counter-revolution in a manner different from Germany. Of course, the situation in Spain was vastly different from that in Germany, but history, tradition and experience played a decisive part.

The character of the Polish socialist movement, its dynamism and its combination of parliamentarianism and revolutionary dynamics, were shaped by many years of struggles. The 150 years of Polish captivity, the iniquitous partitions, weighed heavily in all spheres of Polish life, including the development



of the working class movement. This development followed different paths in the parts occupied by Prussia, Austria and Russia. Under Prussian occupation, the socialist movement lacked the dynamism and importance it gained in the other two parts of the country. The causes for this are various and are beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

In the provinces occupied by Austria the working class socialist movement developed under constitutional conditions; the Polish socialists took part in the elections to municipal bodies and parliamentary institutions, they organized powerful professional, educational, co-operative and health insurance societies. Thus all the forms of European socialism were represented here. In the Vienna parliament, the representatives of Polish socialism soon gained prestige and influence among all the progressive and democratic groups. Party committees organized in towns and villages constantly supported the political activity of the movement. Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century in Galicia there existed a modern and excellently organized mass working class movement.

The conditions in the territory occupied by Russia, the so-called Congress Kingdom, were completely different. Here, ruthless oppression and lack of political freedom drove Poland's political life underground. The working class movement was compelled to follow the same path as that of Russia itself—illegal struggle. Thus, while in Galicia the Polish socialists imitated Western European constitutionalism and parliamentarianism, in Russian Poland they chose the path of revolution. Later, the socialist party of independent Poland became a synthesis of these two currents.

#### INSURRECTIONISM IN POLISH SOCIALISM

Polish socialism under Russian occupation was not divorced from tradition; its ideology and tactics were strongly influenced by its heroic past in three tragic insurrections. Polish socialism was born before the Polish working class; its ideas were adopted by the insurrectionists who emigrated after 1831, but socialism as a working class movement appeared in Poland only in the 1880's, and from the very beginning, despite its international character, was full of "insurrectional traditions." Up to this day, insurrectionism has remained the original and characteristic feature of Polish socialism.

The Poles participated in nearly every European struggle for

freedom. They never forgot the insurrectional legend, and introduced their own ideas and insurrectional tactics into foreign countries.

The personality and actions of Ignacy Hryniewiecki, a Pole active in the Russian socialist movement who made a terroristic attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II, is an excellent illustration of this. Hryniewiecki came from the small Polish nobility of the Grodno region, and as a student at the Technological Institute in St. Petersburg he came into contact with the Russian revolutionary youth, although he also belonged to illegal Polish groups. Reproached by his colleagues for devoting so much energy to the Russian cause instead of giving all his strength to the cause of Poland, he replied: "When you take to the woods, I will be there, but now when you are not doing anything, I will work for the cause of Russian freedom." This incident, characteristically enough, was mentioned in the *Przedswit* (Dawn), a Polish socialist periodical published in Geneva, in its issue of 1883, which contained an obituary notice about Hryniewiecki. His words are typical of the revolutionary traditions of the Polish socialist movement. "To take to the woods," is an old insurrectional phrase which means to join a revolutionary detachment hiding in the forest, fighting with inferior arms from ambush, and displaying all the courage that is required in a hopeless and heroic struggle.

For many Poles, the socialist movement in Russian-occupied Poland meant "taking to the woods," and the working class movement itself was another form of insurrectional activity. This was the attitude of people of the type of Jozef Pilsudski, who came from the Polish Socialist Party.

From the insurrectional point of view, the struggle for independence is ideologically an integral part of the Polish socialist movement. Former participants in the insurrection often joined the first socialist groups. Thus the *Proletariat*, the first socialist organization formed in Poland, despite its strongly pronounced international character, never forgot the insurrectional tradition; this is evidenced, for instance, in an article entitled "1861-1881," published in its underground organ on the occasion of a clash with the Russian army (1861 is the date of the January insurrection in Poland).

Later, the historical development of the socialist ideology in Congress Poland is marked by a split, for the two opposing currents differed in their attitude toward the question of an

independent Poland. One faction, grouped around the Polish Socialist Party, considered the struggle for independence as the most fundamental problem. The other, grouped around the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPL), struggled only for the realization of social postulates, did not desire the separation of Poland from Russia, and conceived of Poland only as a member of a gigantic international organism. The fact that the problem of independence could split the Polish socialist movement is a proof of its importance. The great leaders of international socialism supported the independence of Poland: Marx, Engels, Liebknecht. And although the Polish Social Democracy joined the Comintern after the war of 1914 and became the Polish Communist Party, Lenin declared himself in favor of the classical thesis of Polish socialism, that is, in favor of Polish independence.

The insurrectional tradition also left its mark on the initial organizations of the socialist movement as well as on the technique of the underground struggle. For instance, in May, 1878, when a handful of students, workers and intellectuals founded in Warsaw the first nucleus of the future Polish Socialist Party, they took for their model the decimal organization of the 1863 insurrection. The larger unit, the section, was in 1863 called the "district," and this name (in Polish, *dzielnica*) has persisted to this day in the Warsaw workers' movement. But this is only a detail. The insurrectional character of the struggle is clear also in its militant action. While the Russian socialists confined themselves to attacks on individuals, that is, to terrorist attempts, the Polish socialists developed actions that sometimes assumed the character of guerrilla warfare. Such was the famous attack on a train near Rogow, which was prepared and planned in a strictly military fashion. The demonstration in Grzybow Square in 1904 was in many aspects reminiscent of the demonstrations of 1861-1863, commonly called the January insurrection. Finally, the leadership of the Polish socialists sought a military form of organization. After the 1906 congress, they refused to become merely "a gang of public street cleaners constantly engaged in sweeping up Tsarist mud."

While individual terrorism was the chief method of the Russian revolutionists, the O.B., the Fighting Organization of the Polish Socialist Party, conceived its task differently. The organization strove to prepare the greatest possible number of organizers of the future insurrection, the imminent armed strug-

gle. This tendency, after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, led to the formation in Austrian-occupied Poland of the military organization, *Strzelec*, and later to the Legions, destined to fight for Polish independence.

The action itself had a character of its own, marked by boldness and dynamism. A relatively small group of fighters kept all the police of Congress Poland in check, and terrorized the Tsarist administration by sudden, well-organized attacks. On Bloody Wednesday (August 15, 1906), simultaneous attacks were made on several dozens provocateurs and police spies, terrifying and disorganizing the whole Russian police apparatus. There is also the famous escape from Pawiak prison in Warsaw, where ten political prisoners were being held awaiting sentence, some of them threatened with execution. One morning a group of policemen commanded by an officer came to the prison and presented an order for the immediate transfer of the prisoners. Far outside Warsaw, the prisoners learned that their escort consisted of disguised members of the Polish Socialist Party.

Small wonder that so much heroism and romanticism strongly influenced public feeling. Polish writers of that time, like Żeromski and Brzozowski, devoted their talents to the cause of the Polish socialism.

I am not emphasizing the insurrectional features of the Polish working class movement because I believe they are the most essential, but because they give this movement, whose ideology and international action were based on socialism, a special character.

The Polish Socialist Party justified its tactical strategic and ideological "insurrectionism" by pointing to its social importance. Thus in the program of 1907 written by Feliks Perl, we read that real, complete democratization is impossible under conditions of subjection to a foreign country, for such subjection "hampers normal social development, harms the interests of national culture and exposes the country and the people to intensified exploitation and oppression on the part of the foreign invaders. Only in a free and independent country can the working class develop freely, manifest all its strength, fully carry out the democratization of government institutions and the objectives of socialism. For that reason, the PPS, while aiming at a democratic republic, combines this goal with independence, and struggles for an Independent Democratic Republic."

Insurrectionism is not the only characteristic feature of the

Polish working class movement; it is distinguished from previous insurrectional movements in many other fundamental respects. First of all, the Polish socialist movement was not conspiratorial, not based on an isolated group of conspirators or partisans, but on mass support and it aroused mass sympathy. Although lacking (in Russian-occupied Poland) trade union apparatus, the PPS was able to organize mass strikes and bring thousands of workers into the streets. Both in the leadership and the rank and file of this movement, the workers played a fundamental part, and this is the essential difference between the socialist movement and the old insurrectionary movements. Kosciusko's insurrection (contemporaneous with the French Revolution) mobilized the peasants, and in Warsaw it was even led by a simple artisan, the cobbler Kilinski; nevertheless it was a basically national, people's uprising. But despite the Polanecki Manifesto, which treated the peasants in a friendly and democratic spirit, this insurrection did not solve the agrarian problem by the total abolition of serfdom. The insurrection of 1831 was a military one and perhaps for that reason had greater chances for victory than any other insurrection but again was unable to solve the agrarian problem in a radical way. The Cracow uprising of 1846 although even socialist in its ideology was purely local. The insurrection of 1863, despite the best intentions of its leaders, did not succeed in fully tackling the social problems of the country, especially the agrarian problem. The Polish socialist movement was the first insurrectional movement in Poland that connected the problem of social justice with that of national independence and succeeded in drawing in the masses of the people.

The Polish working class movement was also the first political movement based on permanently organized masses of workers controlled by their leadership and controlling this leadership. While in Russian-occupied Poland, only a "vanguard" was organized, and the masses of the workers merely responded by action to the party appeals, under the Austrian occupation, where the movement was imbued with organizational discipline and was based on strong trade unions, there were permanently organized masses ready to make great sacrifices whenever the party demanded them.

After 1918 and the creation of an independent Poland consisting of territories previously occupied by three empires, there arose a great legal working class party—the PPS (Polish Socialist

Party)—and powerful trade unions controlled by it. This party combined the dynamism, daring and courage of the party active under former Russian occupation, a party accustomed to underground struggle and to organizing mass movements, with the ability to carry on parliamentary struggles, and to initiate social insurance and advance working class legislation, which the Polish socialists had acquired under Austrian occupation. As a result, the PPS, while displaying great organizational versatility and ability for constructive work, did not lose its special militancy and spirit of sacrifice.

The Polish working class thus had great organizational capacities. In the course of several decades the socialist and trade union movements had educated an army of local leaders, a kind of party of "noncoms." Found in every little town, every factory, these "noncoms" formed the nucleus of the organization, and were workers loyal to the flag of the party, ready for every sacrifice. During periods of persecutions they lost their jobs and filled the prisons, but returned to their posts. They also organized various local committees, distributed illegal literature, posted placards, spoke at meetings, lent their apartments for party gatherings and carried on agitation in the villages. These humble militants built the movement with their faith and self-denial, demanding little for themselves and giving everything.

Socialist influences spread beyond the movement itself. They manifested themselves in municipalities, social insurance organizations, labor courts, village arbitration committees, educational organizations, co-operatives, etc. Nor did the party remain silent on any important governmental questions. The working class movement also succeeded in protecting itself from political corruption. The Polish Socialist Party remained and still remains the center of the Polish working-class movement, and has never yielded to the communists or other competitors who in their attempt to gain mass influence combated the Socialists. The splits caused with the help of the government in 1930 did not succeed in breaking the PPS, and although membership in the trade unions decreased somewhat and several former leaders, loyal to Pilsudski rather than to the party, left, most of the workers remained.

The predominant ideology of the PPS was Marxian. Although a few prominent Polish socialists sought an ideological basis in a kind of humanism (Limanowski, Posner), such currents never attained the importance they had in France, for in-

stance, where tradition and later the personality of Jean Jaurés lent great weight to non-Marxian tendencies in socialism. But even the Marxian elements in Polish socialism had a special character. Many socialist writers sought their own paths, among them Stanislaw Brzozowski, an independent thinker who greatly influenced the Polish youth during the first decade of this century. Similarly Abramowski, the theoretician of the co-operative movement, and Krzywicki, show many original features. Long talmudic discussions about the interpretation of the master's words were not carried on in Poland, and orthodox Marxism, alien to Marx himself, and more akin to religion than to science, did not gain many partisans in Poland.

#### INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Despite its insurrectional and patriotic feature, the Polish Socialist Party always retained its international character, and from its inception belonged to the Second International, and in the same way the Polish workers' movement was connected with the international movement.

These international connections, as we have seen, were not limited to slogans and words. During the Spanish civil war, many Polish workers fought in the international brigades, while Polish socialism also supported other workers' struggles abroad, not only morally, but also materially, to the limit of its means. But even within the framework of an international organization, each socialist group preserves its individuality.

Thus, in England, the workers' movement was born from the trade unions, economic organizations, which historically preceded the political movement. Although ideologically English socialism is very old, and there were many English socialists even at the time of Owen, socialism as a political mass movement is a rather recent phenomenon in England. The Labor Party won its first parliamentary seat in 1902; the PPS succeeded in having one of its candidates elected to the Austrian parliament in 1897 and had to work under much less favorable conditions.

In America, up to this very day, the workers' movement is first of all a trade union movement. Improved living conditions, higher wages, and labor rights continue to be the exclusive, or almost exclusive, concerns of the American trade unions. The CIO and AFL show little interest in problems of domestic or foreign policy, and the Liberal and American Labor Party are for the moment local in character.

The Polish workers' movement is both a trade union and a political movement. The PPS always had considerable influence over the trade unions, and the latter acted politically through the parties with which they were connected, so that for the historical reasons discussed above, the working class movement directly influenced the political life of the country. Thus, the Polish movement was more like the French or the German movement than the American. But this comparison is not quite adequate, for the French revolutionary traditions of 1848 and 1871 are very different from the Polish. France experienced revolutions that lasted months, but Poland under Russian occupation experienced a state of permanent revolution that lasted several decades, and during that entire period, as in Russia itself, the revolutionists constantly waged underground battles, practically without any interruption or period of legality. And after 1871, the French workers enjoyed constitutions and democratic conditions. As for Germany, the revolutionary traditions of the socialists were not rich, and the German movement was legalistic in character.

#### CONCLUSION

After this war Polish socialism and the Polish workers' movement will be confronted with new tasks, and reality will impose certain necessities on the policy of the workers. Polish political reality is above all defined by the existence of three great social strata, which are natural factors for democracy: the peasants, the workers and the intelligentsia.

The intelligentsia will be completely impoverished, and economically ruined, and a large part of the Polish bourgeoisie, too, has been reduced to misery by the Germans. The invader has taken over the monopoly of exploitation in Poland, and all classes are victimized by this policy of plunder. We will probably find in Poland a large group of marginal, *déclassé* people, without employment or trade, without homes, living wretchedly from day to day. Under these conditions the Polish labor movement will not be able to limit itself to the struggle for the improvement of the living conditions of the proletariat or manual workers, but will have to include the large masses of the intelligentsia. In this it will continue a policy begun several years before the war.

However, it is not indispensable that all the intelligentsia and



unfortunate *déclassés* persons should be placed within the framework of the working class movement. They should be taken care of by a truly democratic independent party that might gather the intellectual and the middle classes around its standard. Present day developments in Poland seem to tend in this direction.

The alliance of the three great groups of peasants, workers, and intellectuals and middle class, that is, the Peasant Party, the Polish Socialist Party, and the Democratic Party, is a fundamental condition for the creation of a democratic political system in Poland, which would be based on organized social forces and not on temporary popular emotions. Such an alliance could help solve all the economic and social problems of Poland, lead the country out of misery and guarantee the elementary rights of the citizens. Moreover, it could stabilize social conditions, which is tremendously important in this part of Europe, for no society can possibly survive too frequent economic and social upheavals. After the war, once life has been reorganized, and the necessary reforms have been conveniently carried out, a long period of stabilization of social relations will be necessary.

With regard to foreign policy, the Polish working class movement has accepted the idea of a federation of Central and Eastern Europe and of a European Union. Such a federation would naturally be a member of a world system of collective security, which is the prerequisite for a permanent international order after the war. Polish socialist and democratic circles also realize the necessity of an understanding with Soviet Russia, which depends first of all upon the good will of the Soviets. There have been many attempts in this direction, and the trend of events is clear.

The Polish people, who for many centuries have fought every invasion, are today waging a bloody war against the German invader. The Poles are ready to limit their sovereignty for the purpose of collective security if the other nations do the same, for without collective security and a federation there will be no peace. But limitation of sovereignty must be based on co-operation, not on foreign domination.

---

## Selected Bibliography

---

(This bibliography is not exhaustive, and should only serve as a guide. As far as facts concerning Poland under Nazi occupation are concerned, the most valuable material are the underground secret reports and the underground publications which are obviously not available to the public and therefore not listed.)

- LOUIS ADAMIC, *Two-Way Passage*, New York, 1941.
- JAKÓB APENSZLAK AND MOSHE POLAKIEWICZ, *Armed Resistance of Jews in Poland*, New York, 1944.
- EDITOR JACOB APENSZLAK, co-editors: Jacob Kenner, Dr. Isaak Lewin, Dr. Moscs Polakiewicz, *The Black Book of the Polish Jewry*, New York, 1943.
- ARNOST BLÁHA, *Sociologie Inteligence*, /in Czech—Sociology of the Intelligentsia/, Prague, 1937.
- JÓZEF BLOCH, *Polskie Ustawodawstwo Społeczne*, /Polish Social Legislation/, Warsaw, 1938.
- FRANCIS J. BROWN, edited by Joseph Slabey Roucek, *Our Racial and National Minorities*, New York, 1939.
- ALEKSANDER BRUCKNER, *Dzieje Kultury Polskiej*, /History of Polish Culture/, Cracow, 1931.
- RAYMOND L. BUELL, *Poland Key to Europe*, New York-London, 1939.
- JAMES BURNHAM, *The Managerial Revolution*, New York, 1941.
- JÓZEF CHALASINSKI, *Młode Pokolenie Chłopów*, /The Young Generation of Peasants/, Warsaw, 1939.
- ADAM CHMIEL, "Organizacja miejska cechów," /Organization of Guilds in the Cities/, *Rocznik Krakowski*, Cracow, 1902.
- ADAM CIOLKOSZ, "Warsaw's Sixty-Three Days of Tortured Freedom," *Common Wealth Review*, London, December, 1944.
- ADAM CIOLKOSZ, "The Polish Socialist Party /PPS/," *Polish Fortnightly Review*, No. 81, London, December, 1943.
- CONGRESS OF POLISH TRADE UNIONS, *Workmen's Protective Legislation in Poland*, London, 1941.

LEWIS COREY, *The Unfinished Task*, New York.

TADEUSZ CZAJKOWSKI, "Próba Szacunkowego Obliczenia Skali Zarobków Robotniczych w Polsce," /An Attempt to Estimate Labor Wages in Poland/, *Statystyka Pracy*, Vol. XIII. 1934.

FRANCIS DELAISI, *Les Deux Europes*, Paris, 1929.

KAROL ESTREICHER, "Minjatury Kodeksu Bema oraz ich Tresc Obyczajowa," *Rocznik Krakowski*, /Behen's Miniatures and Their Social Interpretation/, Cracow, 1933.

STANISLAW ESTREICHER, Kraków i Magdeburg, /Cracow and Magdeburg/, Cracow, 1911.

LEON FELDE, "Lodz Le Manchester Polonais," *Bulletin de la Societe Neucha teloise de Geographie*, Tome XLII, 1934.

WILHELM FELDMAN, *Dzieje Polskiej Mysli Politycznej w Okresie Porozbiorowym*, /in Polish—History of Polish Political Thought after the Partitions/ Cracow, 1913–1920 /three volumes published within this period/.

FELIKS GROSS, *Proletariat i Kultura*, /Proletariat and Culture/, Warsaw, 1938.

MIECZYSLAW HAIMAN, *Polacy Wśród Pionierów Ameryki*, /Poles Among the American Pioneers/, Chicago, 1930.

MIECZYSLAW HAIMAN, *Polish Past in America* /1608–1875/, Chicago, 1939.

MIECZYSLAW HAIMAN, *Polacy w Ameryce*, /Poles in America/, Chicago, 1930.

*Information Bulletin*, Embassy of USSR, Washington, No. 23, 1944. "Truth about the Warsaw Uprising," by Engineer D.

Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, /Institute of Social Economics/, *Pamiętniki Chłopów*, /Memoirs of the Peasants/, Warsaw, 1939.

Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, /Institute of Social Economics/, *Pamiętniki Emigrantów*, /Memoirs of Emigrants/, Warsaw, 1939.

Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, /Institute of Social Economics/, *Pamiętniki Bezrobotnych*, /Memoirs of the Unemployed/, Warsaw, 1939.

Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, /Institute of Social Economics/, *Warunki Życia Robotniczego w Warszawie, Łodzi, i Zagłębiu Dąbrowskiem w Świecie Ankiety 1927 roku*, /Standards of Living of Workers in Warsaw, Lodz and Dabrowa Basin According to the Inquiry of 1927/, Warsaw, 1929.

Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, /Institute of Social Economics/, *Drobny Przemysł i Chałupnictwo*, /Small Industry and Home Industry/, Warsaw, 1931.

Instytut Spraw Społecznych, /Institute of Social Affairs/, *Pamiętniki Lekarzy*, /Memoirs of Physicians/, Warsaw, 1939.

International Labor Office, *The International Labor Code*, Montreal, 1941.

- JAN KARSKI, *Story of a Secret State*, Boston, 1944.
- STANISŁAW A. KEMPNER, *Rozwój Gospodarczy Polski od Rozbiorów do Niepodległości*, /Economic Development of Poland from Partitions until Independence/, Warsaw, 1924.
- STANISŁAW A. KEMPNER, *Dzieje Gospodarcze Polski Porozbiorowej*, /Economic History of Poland after Partitions/, Warsaw, 1920-1922.
- JOANNA KORMANOWA, *Małerialy do Bibliografii Druków Socjalistycznych na Ziemiach Polskich w Latach 1866-1918*, /Materials for a Bibliography of Socialist Prints Issued in Poland between 1866-1918/, Warsaw, 1918.
- STANISŁAW KOSZUTSKI, *Rozwój Ekonomiczny Królestwa Polskiego*, /The Economic Development of the Polish Kingdom/, Warsaw, 1905.
- HALINA KRAHELSKA, STEFAN PRUSS, *Zycie Bezrobotnych*, /Life of Unemployed/, Warsaw, 1933.
- HALINA KRAHELSKA, *Lódzki Przemysł Włókienniczy, wobec Ustawodawstwa Pracy*, /The Textile Industries of Lodz and Labor Legislation/, Warsaw, 1927.
- HALINA KRAHELSKA, *Praca Dzieci i Młodocianych w Polsce*, /Juvenile and Child Labor in Poland/, Warsaw, 1928.
- HALINA KRAHELSKA, *Praca Kobiet w Przemysle Współczesnym*, /Employment of Women in Contemporary Industry/, Warsaw, 1932.
- MANFRED KRIDL, WŁADYSŁAW MALINOWSKI, JÓZEF WITTLIN, edited by, *For Your Freedom and Ours*, Polish Democratic Spirit for Centuries, New York, 1943.
- JÓZEF KRZYŻANOWSKI, *Górnictwo w Wieliczce*, /Mining of Wieliczka; this is not the exact title of this important contribution on history of salt miners and mining in Poland. The article is unfortunately not available in the U.S.A. and the exact title could not be secured/, *Rocznik Krakowski*, Cracow.
- STANISŁAW KWATRZĘBA, *Historja Ustroju Polski w Zarysie*, /An Outline of the History of Poland's Government/, Lwów, 1917.
- LUDWIK LANDAU, *Skład Zawodowy Ludności Polski*, /The Occupational Structure of the Polish Population/, Warsaw, 1931.
- LUDWIK LANDAU, *Bezrobocie i Stopa Życiowa*, /Unemployment and Standard of Living/, Warsaw, 1936.
- LUDWIK LANDAU, *Dochody z Pracy Najemnej w r. 1929.*, /Salary Income in 1929/, Warsaw, 1936.
- LUDWIK LANDAU, *Bezrobocie i Stopa Życiowa Ludności Dzielnicy Robotniczych Warszawy*, /Unemployment and Standard of Living in the Workers' Sections of Warsaw/, Warsaw, 1936.
- LUDWIK LANDAU, *Place w Polsce w Związku z Rozwojem Gospodarczym*, /Salaries in Poland in Connection with the Economic Development/, Warsaw, 1933.

- BOLESŁAW LIMANOWSKI, *Historia Demokracji Polskiej w Epoce Porozbiorowej*, /History of Polish Democracy after Partitions/, Warsaw, 1922-1923.
- BOLESŁAW LIMANOWSKI, *Pamiętniki /1835-1870/*, /Memoirs, 1835-1870/, Warsaw, 1937.
- BOLESŁAW LIMANOWSKI, *Stanisław Worcell*, /in Polish—a biography/, Cracow, 1910.
- ROSA LUXEMBURG, *Die Industrielle Entwicklung Polens*, Leipzig, 1898.
- JAN WAŁAW MACHAJSKI, *Umstwiennyj Raboczyj*, /in Russian—The Intellectual Worker/, Geneva, 1905, excerpts in English in *The Making of Society*, in *Outline of Sociology*, edited by V. F. Calverton, The Modern Library, New York, 1937.
- WŁADYSŁAW R. MALINOWSKI, "The Polish Underground Labor Movement," *International Postwar Problems*, Vol. 1. No. 3, June, 1944.
- KARL MARX, FRIEDRICH ENGELS, WILHELM LIEBKNECHT, *Odbudowanie Polski* /Reconstruction of Poland/, Warsaw-Cracow, 1910.
- Materiały do Historji PPS i Ruchu Rewolucyjnego w Zaborze Rosyjskim od 1893 do r. 1904.* /Materials on the History of the PPS and the Revolutionary Movement under the Russian Occupation. Edited by Aleksander Malinowski although not published under his name/, Warsaw-Cracow, 1907.
- MAKSYMILJAN MEŁOCH, "Ruch Strajkowy w Królestwie Polskiem w Latach 1870-1886," /Strikes in Congress-Poland between 1870-1886/, *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, Poznań-Warsaw, 1937.
- SOLOMON MENDELSON, *The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto*, New York, 1944.
- SOLOMON MENDELSON, "The Jewish Underground Labor Movement in Poland," *International Postwar Problems*, Vol. 1. No. 3., June, 1944.
- ANNA MINKOWSKA, *Rodzina Bezrobotna*, /The Unemployed Family/, Warsaw, 1935.
- ZYGMUNT MYŚLAKOWSKI, FELIKS GROSS, *Robotnicy Pisa*, /The Workers Write/, Cracow-Warsaw, 1938.
- BORIS I. NICOLAEVSKY, "A Study of Polish-Russian Socialist Relations," *New Europe*, Vol. 1., No. 10. pp. 254-257.
- MAX NOMAD, *Rebels and Renegades*, New York, 1932.
- LISTON M. OAK, "Poland's Fighting Record: 1939-44." *The New Leader*. New York. November 18, 1944.
- JAN PIEKALKIEWICZ, *Sprawozdanie z Badan Składu Ludności Robotniczej w Polsce*, /Report on the Inquiry of the Structure of the Working Class in Poland/, Warsaw, 1934.
- EUGENJA PRAGIEROWA, *Warunki Pracy Robotników Młodocianych*

- w Polsce*, /Labor Conditions of the Juvenile Workers in Poland/, Warsaw, 1929.
- The Black Book of Poland*, Putnam's Sons, New York, 1942.
- Poland, Republic of, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *German Occupation of Poland*, Polish White Book, New York, 1942.
- Poland Fights, Polish Labor Group, *Program for a People's Poland*, New York, 1943.
- Poland Fights, Polish Labor Group, *Manifesto to the Peoples of the World*, New York, 1941.
- Poland Fights, Polish Labor Group, *Oswiecim: Camp of Death*, New York, 1944.
- Polish Ministry of Information, *The German Invasion of Poland*, London.
- Polish Government Information Center, "Battle of Warsaw," *Polish Facts and Figures*, No. 10, New York, 1944.
- Polish Information Center, "The Polish Government, The Polish Underground State," *Polish Facts and Figures*, No. 1, New York, 1944.
- JAN PTASNIK, "Pospółstwo, jego Rola i Znaczenie w Dziejach Krakowa," *Sprawozdania Polskiej Akademji Umiejetnosci*, /"The Role of Commonalty in History of Cracow"—Bulletin of the Polish Academy of Science/, Cracow, 1915.
- Res, *Dzieje Ruchu Socjalistycznego w Zaborze Rosyjskim*, /History of the Socialist Movement under the Russian Occupation/, Warsaw, 1910.
- WILLIAM JOHN ROSE, *The Rise of Polish Democracy*, London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1944.
- EDWARD ROSSET, *Proletariat Łódzki w Świetle Badan Demograficznych*, /Proletariat of Lodz—a Demographic Analysis/, Warsaw, 1930.
- WALENTY ROZDZIENSKI, *Officina Ferrara abo Huta y Warstat z Kuzniami Szlachetnego Dziela /1612/*, wyd. Roman Pollak, /Officina Ferrara or Foundry and Workshop, 1612/ edited by Roman Pollak, Katowice, 1937.
- JAN RUTKOWSKI, *Histoire Economique de la Pologne avant les Partages*, Paris, 1927.
- STANISŁAW RYCHLIŃSKI, *Place i Zarobki Robotników w Przemysle w Dziesięcioleciu 1918-1928*. /Salaries of Workers in Industry Since 1918 Until 1928/, Warsaw, 1929.
- STANISŁAW RYCHLIŃSKI, *Czas Pracy w Przemysle Polskim w Świetle Wyników Ankiety Związku Stowarzyszeń Zawodowych*, /Working Time in the Polish Industry—on the Basis of the Trade Union Congress Inquiry/, Warsaw, 1929.
- SIMON SEGAL: *The New Order in Poland*, Pub. by Lee Furman, New York, 1942.

- BERNADOTTE E. SCHMITT, edited by, *Poland*. University of California Press, 1945. 436 pp.
- JAMES T. SIOTWELL, *Origins of the International Labor Organization*, Columbia University Press, 1934.
- JAN SŁOMKA, *From Serfdom to Self-Government*, London, 1941.
- STANISŁAW SMOŁKA, *Polityka Lubeckiego*, /Policy of Lubecki/, Cracow, 1907.
- BEN STOLBERG, *Tailors' Progress*, New York, 1944.
- WILLIAM I. THOMAS and FLORIAN ZNANIECKI, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, New York, 1927.
- "Warsaw," *Politics*, October, 1944.
- LEON WASILEWSKI, *Zarys Dziejów Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej*, /An Outline of the History of the Polish Socialist Party/, Warsaw, 1925.
- MAX WEINREICH, *Der Weg zu Unserer Jugnt*, /Yiddish—The Way of Our Youth/, Vilna, 1935.
- ALEXANDER WÓJCICKI, *Dzieje Robotników Przemysłowych w Polsce*, /History of Industrial Workers in Poland/, Warsaw, 1929.
- ANTONI ZDANOWSKI, *Warunki Mieszkaniowe Robotników w Okresie Kryzysu i Bezrobocia*, /Housing of Workers During Crisis and Unemployment/, Warsaw, 1936.
- ADAM ZEBALSKI, *Osadnictwo Robotnicze*, /Workers' Settlement/, Warsaw, 1935.
- Z Pola Walki, *Cele i Drogi Podziemnego Ruchu Robotniczego w Polsce*, /From the Battlefield, the Aims of the Polish Underground Labor Movement/, London, 1943.

